

# The CLERGY REVIEW

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## ENGLISH SPIRITUAL WRITERS

V. SAINT JOHN FISHER

SAINT JOHN FISHER'S writings are so little known that it will be helpful to begin with a list of them. The classification here used must not be applied too rigidly. In the wider sense of the term, all his writings were spiritual, for they concerned the defence and propagation of the Faith; but in the special application of the term as used today—*aids to personal sanctification*—only a small number of his published works can be so classified.

### I. SERMONS

#### (a) OFFICIAL

1. *Funeral sermon on Henry VII* (1509)
2. *Requiem sermon on Lady Margaret Beaufort* (1509)
3. *Against the pernicious doctrine of Martin Luther* (1521, at St Paul's Cross)
4. *Concerning certain heretics* (1526, at St Paul's Cross)

#### (b) PASTORAL

5. *The Seven Penitential Psalms* (1509)
6. *Two sermons on the Feast of All Saints* (1520)
7. *Good Friday Sermon* (?)

### II. CONTROVERSIES

8. *De unica Magdalena* (1519)
9. *Convulsio calumniarum . . .* (1522)  
Defending the presence of St Peter in Rome.
10. *Assertionis Lutheranae . . .* (1523)  
An answer to Luther's *Assertion*.
11. *Sacri sacerdotii defensio . . .* (1525)  
English translation by Mgr P. E. Hallett (1935).
12. *Defensio Regie . . .* (1525)  
In defence of Henry VIII's book.
13. *De veritate corporis . . .* (1527)  
Against Oecolampadius.
14. *De causa matrimonii . . .* (1530)  
Defence of Catherine of Aragon.

## III. SPIRITUAL

- 15. *De necessitate orandi* (1520?)
- 16. *A Spiritual Consolation* (1534-5)
- 17. *The Ways to Perfect Religion* (1534-5)

A collected edition of the Latin works was published in Würzburg in 1597; it also contained Latin translations of Nos. 3, 5, 7 and 17.<sup>1</sup> Three pieces not otherwise known are a sermon (*De Justitia Pharisaorum*), *Epistola . . . de Charitate Christiana*, and No. 15, none of which had been previously published as far as is known.

*De necessitate orandi* was translated into English and published in Paris in 1640 as *A Treatise of Prayer*. Only the initials of the translator are given, R.A.B.; it is conjectured that these stand for Robert Anderton, Benedictine. St Edmund's is fortunate in possessing one of the few known copies. I think that it is possible that *De necessitate orandi* is a translation of a lost English original; it is clearly intended for ordinary folk and is not controversial as Fisher's Latin works were. So R.A.B.'s work may be a translation of a translation. It was reprinted, with slight modifications, in 1887.

The only volume of Fisher's writings now in print is in the E.E.T.S. series (1876) which contains Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 16 and 17 in our list; the 1935 reprint added No. 4.

It will be noticed that No. 6 has not been reprinted. It was first published in 1532 by William Rastell (St Thomas More's nephew). Only four copies are known, of which three are in the U.S.A., and one in the Bodleian. An account of these sermons is given on pages 80 to 86 of my *Saint John Fisher*.

Saint John Fisher was a preacher and teacher. This is not to ignore his pastoral work (so unusual in his day) as Bishop of Rochester for thirty years, nor his great influence as Chancellor of Cambridge University during the same long period; in both these capacities he put emphasis on the need for more good preachers and teachers. When he was Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge in 1502, a Papal Bull was granted at his request

<sup>1</sup> The translations were the work of John Fenn (brother of Blessed James Fenn) who was at New College, Oxford, before he fled to the Low Countries. For forty years before his death in 1615, he was confessor to the English Augustinian nuns at Louvain.

for the appointment of twelve preachers of the University to be available for any diocese. Two years later he persuaded the Lady Margaret Beaufort to endow a chantry at the University for a preacher of annual sermons in London and other places. The Lady Margaret Readerships in Divinity in both Universities were also established at his suggestion. His statutes for St John's College (of which he was the effective Founder) show that he regarded the training of priests as its primary purpose. Alas, what he hoped would be a seminary for priests became, after his death, a nursery of Protestants.

He himself was a constant preacher. His earliest and anonymous biographer wrote of "his great and painful diligence in preaching the Word of God, which custom he used not only in his younger days, when health served, but also even in his extreme age, when many times his weary and feeble legs were not able to sustain his weak body standing, but forced him to have a chair, and to teach sitting".

William Rastell, speaking from personal knowledge, wrote: "He was also a very diligent preacher and the notablest in this Realm, both in his time or before or since, for his excellent learning and moving the affections of his hearers to cleave to God and goodness, to embrace virtue and to flee sin."

I have stressed John Fisher's zeal as a preacher because it has a direct bearing on his spiritual writing. His intention was not to dazzle by rhetoric or learning, but to win his hearers' confidence. The style he used was suited to the needs of ordinary folk. His language was therefore simple and the illustrations he used homely. Here is an example:

If a table be foul and filthy by long continuance, first we scrape it, after when it is scraped we wash it, and last after washing we wipe and make it clean. Our soul is compared unto a table whereon nothing was painted, nevertheless with many misdoings and spots of sin we have defouled and made it deform in the sight of God. Therefore it is needful that it be scraped, washed and wiped. It shall be scraped by the inward sorrow and compunction of the heart when we are sorry for our sin. It shall be washed with the tears of our eyes when we acknowledge and confess our sin. And last it shall be wiped and made clean when that we be about for to make amends and do satisfaction by

good deeds for our sins. These three things that we have spoken of cometh without doubt of the gracious pity of God. Thou art sorry for thy sin, it is a gift of Almighty God. Thou makest knowledge of thy sin weeping and wailing for it, it is a gift of Almighty God. Thou art busy in good works to do satisfaction, which also is a gift of Almighty God.

This extract comes from the sermon on Psalm 50, *Miserere mei Deus*, in the series on the Penitential Psalms. These were preached in 1508 to a congregation that included the Lady Margaret Beaufort, and it was at her request that he wrote them down—not the least of that great lady's good works! The book was published in 1509 and reprinted seven times before the Saint's martyrdom. This popularity was well founded, and, in spite of the classification given above, I would place it at the head of his spiritual writings. It is a great loss that this book is not available in modern spelling.<sup>1</sup> It is one of the forgotten classics of our religious literature.

No one should read these sermons, or meditations, as they may be called, who wants soft speaking. The preacher warned his hearers again and again of the reality of hell:

Of a truth every man and woman shall stand before the throne of Almighty God at the day of Judgement, and at that time such as never would be penitent for their offences in this life shall be punished very sharply and grievously in the eternal pains of hell and with this most sharp and grievous words spoken by Almighty God, "Go ye cursed people into the eternal fire." They shall go away from his face whose beauty cannot be expressed, whereon the angels desire to look and to behold it.

But against that fearful picture, he set the infinite love and mercy of God:

Truly the mercy of our most mighty and best Lord God is great, and so great that it hath all measures of greatness. Sometimes trees be called great for their goodly and great height. Pits

<sup>1</sup> The vocabulary would need some modernization. John Fisher was a northerner and he used words which have dropped out of the language. Thomas More was a southerner and his vocabulary is therefore more like present-day speech, so his books are easier to read.

be called great for their deepness. Far journeys be called great because they are long. Streets and highways be called great for their breadth and wideness. But the mercy of God containeth and is measured by all these measures of greatness, and not only by one of them.

The theme of this series of sermons is the need for contrition, confession, and satisfaction which are called the three parts of penance. We may get the impression, if we read the book from cover to cover, that his theme is over-laboured, but we shall get a different impression if we read the sermons at intervals as they were preached. The variations he gives to his thoughts from sermon to sermon repay study from the point of view of craftsmanship in preaching. His use of everyday similitudes has been illustrated, but he also had the ability of putting his ideas in epigrammatic form to make them the more memorable. One quotation must suffice; he was speaking of Apostolic times: "In that time were no chalices of gold, but there were many golden priests; now be many chalices of gold, and almost no golden priests."

A harsh saying, but it explains his zeal for the training of priests who would be good preachers.

It is tempting to linger over these sermons for there is so much in them for our instruction, but I must hope that the reader will explore their riches for himself.

Two specifically spiritual writings were the fruits of the Saint's imprisonment in the Tower—others may have been lost. While Saint John Fisher was engaged on this work in one cell, in another cell Saint Thomas More was composing his finest book *A Dialogue of Comfort*. These testaments, as they may be called, of the two Saints are a precious memorial of them.

*A Spiritual Consolation* and *The Ways to Perfect Religion* were written by John Fisher for his half-sister, Elizabeth White, a Dominican nun at Dartford.<sup>1</sup> No doubt he visited her there as it lay in his diocese, and perhaps she asked him to write down the instruction he had given her by word of mouth. We can easily imagine how precious these two manuscripts must have

<sup>1</sup> The little that is known of Elizabeth White and the Dominican nuns is given in *A Hundred Homeless Years* by Godfrey Anstruther, O.P., on pp. 4-14.

been to her in the years of exile and poverty that were before her. They were published in the reign of Queen Mary; this was fortunate as otherwise they might have been lost.

*A Spiritual Consolation* takes the form of a meditation "made in the person of one that was hastily prevented by death". The treatment can be illustrated by an extract. He expresses his regret for having put off so frequently the opportunity "to repent me and amend my life".

And so, alas, from time to time, that now death in the mean time hath prevented me; my purpose was good, but it lacked execution. My will was straight, but it was not effectual, my mind well intended, but no fruit came thereof. All for because I delayed so often and never put it in effect, that, that I had purposed. And therefore delay it not as I have done, but before all other business put this first in surety, which ought to be chief and principal business. Neither building of Colleges, nor making of sermons, nor giving of alms, neither yet any other manner of business shall help you without this. . . . Be you your own friend, do you these suffrages for your own soul, whether they be prayers or alms or any other penitential painfulness.

When he wrote of colleges and sermons, was he reviewing his own life?

*The Ways to Perfect Religion* begins with an elaborately worked-out "comparison between the life of hunters and the life of religious persons". One thing is certain; John Fisher knew what he was talking about when he described the coursing of the hare. This may be an unexpected glimpse of him, but one of the all too few sidelights we have on his personal life is a note from Lord Bergavenny inviting him to bring his greyhounds for "disport" in Ashdown Forest.

These counsels to his sister end with the suggestion that whenever she feels "any dullness of mind" she should "use these short prayers following, for every day in the week one. . . . For thus in your heart you may shortly pray what company soever you be amongst". Here they are:

1. O blessed Jesus, make me love thee entirely.
2. O blessed Jesus I would fain, but without thy help I cannot.

3. O blessed Jesus let me deeply consider the greatness of thy love towards me.
4. O blessed Jesus, give unto me grace heartily to thank thee for thy benefits.
5. O blessed Jesus, give me good will to serve thee, and to suffer.
6. O sweet Jesus, give me a natural remembrance of thy passion.
7. O sweet Jesus, possess my heart, hold and keep it only to thee.

It has already been noted that the English version of the brief *Treatise of Prayer* is possibly from a Latin translation of a lost original. The extracts below are not therefore in the Saint's own words. He deals with the reasons for prayer, the chief fruits of prayer, and the manner of prayer. The final section has an interesting passage on how long we should pray.

Our chiefest labour in prayer must be to inflame and set our hearts on fire, with this fervency of charity, and then as it were, to spin out our prayer, so long until we have attained unto this end. But when through weariness of our frail body we find this heat and fervour in us to grow cold, then must we desist and pray no longer, but presently apply ourselves to some other works of virtue.

He has some remarks on the use of vocal prayer.

I do protest here that it is not my intention to affirm anything in derogation of vocal prayer, such as is either received by custom or ordained by the authorities of the Church, or inflicted by way of penance, or assumed by vow or any other promise whatever by which a man hath bound himself to vocal prayer. But my opinion is, that whosoever is free from these bonds, and in possession of his absolute liberty, and desires to serve God after the best, purest, and most pleasing way unto Him, it is far more profitable for such an one to pray with his heart only than with his tongue and heart together.

Then comes one of his similitudes:

Not unlike with him, who after great labour and long travail hath passed the sea, and is arrived at his desired haven, then he forsaketh the ship that brought him, and applieth himself wholly

to the end and purpose for which he came, and is no more solicitous for the poor vessel that brought him thither. So also he that by the help and use of vocal prayer as by a ship hath attained unto the inward consolation of his soul, and to this fervour of charity in God, must then make it his chieftest care and study, that this fervour by no means grow cold, but then leaving of his vocal prayer, he must follow this Holy Spirit who hath brought him to this fervour withersoever it shall lead him; then he must not use his own words, but whatsoever the Holy Ghost shall suggest unto his heart, that let him desire, not with words, but with burning sighs and joy.

There is one other composition of Saint John Fisher to which reference should be made as it has become available only within the last few years. Among the papers in the Public Record Office that were taken from Rochester or the Tower (it is not certain which) there are five pages in the Saint's handwriting. These are the draft of a long prayer or meditation written when he knew "the manifold perils" that beset him. The manuscript is in his neat handwriting but is so interlined with alterations that its decipherment proved most difficult. The task, however, was achieved by an Australian priest, and the text was published in *The Month*, and has been reprinted as an appendix to my *Saint John Fisher*.

This survey of the Saint's writings may fittingly end with the concluding sentences of that prayer:

I beseech Thee to shed upon my heart Thy Holy Spirit by whose gracious presence I may be warmed, heated and kindled with the spiritual fire of charity and with the sweetly burning love of all godly affections, that I may fastly set my heart, soul and mind upon Thee and assuredly trust that Thou art my very loving Father and according to the same trust I may love Thee with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind and all my power. Amen.

E. E. REYNOLDS

FAITH AND DISSIDENT CHRISTIANS<sup>1</sup>

IT IS unfortunately true that Catholics sometimes call in question the existence and very possibility of a genuine Christian faith in those separated from the Church. On the popular level, the ambiguity of our language about the conversion of Anglicans and other Christians is a frequent cause of misunderstanding. When these return to the Church, we speak of them coming to the faith or receiving the gift of faith, and people are led to think that before conversion the converts did not have a true supernatural faith. But the refusal of faith to non-Catholics is occasionally maintained in a more learned way. Protestants, we are told, accept many Christian truths but they have not the right motive; their assent springs from private judgement, so that their acceptance of these truths is not the assent of faith. Or it is argued that without the infallible guidance of the Church a man cannot know with the certitude necessary for faith that a given truth is divinely revealed; his so-called faith becomes then a personal and arbitrary preference. Or it is urged that since one or other article of faith is denied the whole assent is vitiated; for divine faith is one and indivisible.

These attacks on the genuineness of the faith of dissident Christians have not been invented for the occasion; they have been heard. But it is to be doubted whether those who launch them realize the consequences of what they say. To deny the Christian faith to anyone is to deny him the Christian life. Faith is the fundamental act of the Christian life; on it all the rest depends. Without a genuine and supernatural faith, there can be no Christian life. To say that a person is without a true faith is to say that he is without the life of grace and in the state of sin. A compromise attitude which would question the validity of a non-Catholic's faith while admitting the sincerity of his Christian life makes no sense theologically; it is, in fact, untenable. Faith is the root of every Christian life; it is basic to the life of grace wherever this is found. To refuse the gift of faith to dissident Christians is to declare spurious their Christian life.

Such an attitude would be unjust and disastrous. There are

<sup>1</sup> A paper read at Spode House, Hawkesyard Priory, 10 January 1959.

no grounds for declaring it the attitude of the Catholic Church. A recent work<sup>1</sup> examines carefully the papal documents on Church unity and finds that Rome recognizes the presence of a true divine faith among Protestant Christians. This, besides the warmer acknowledgement accorded to the Christian life of the Eastern dissidents. Modern theologians do not hesitate in this matter. Many of the questions discussed in theology today would be meaningless, were it not for the assumption of a genuine Christian faith and life in those visibly separated from the Church. And, needless to say, Catholic ecumenical work is only possible because there exist real Christian values in other communions; and every Christian value is the fruit of faith.

Our separated brethren have a true Christian faith. Granted. No claim is being made here to judge any individual person. Only God knows the sincerity or insincerity of each one who remains outside the unity of the Church. All the same, we are entitled to conclude from the fact that their position is due to historical causes outside their control and from the many signs of Christian life among them that the multitude of separated Christians around us are sincere, and consequently enjoy a true Christian faith and life. Such a situation gives rise to various problems which are worth discussing. Faith is in truth one and indivisible; how can it be possessed by those who differ from us in creed? Has not the Church an indispensable role to play in faith? What is meant by conversion? Does not the convert receive the gift of faith? Can a false Church be said to mediate genuine Christian faith to its members? To discuss such questions is the purpose of this paper.

It seems best to begin by examining in a general way the part of the Church in our act of faith. The Church is not the motive of our faith. The motive of divine faith is, and can only be, the uncreated Truth of God. Faith always involves a personal encounter with God as Truth. Faith is a theological virtue and that means that by it we must attain God Himself. Our faith rests on nothing less than the Reality of God, and by our act of faith we are brought into contact with God as the First

<sup>1</sup> *That They May Be One: A Study of Papal Doctrine (Leo XIII-Pius XII)*, by Gregory Baum, o.s.A. (London, 1958), pp. 40-64. This paper was worked out in its main lines before I read Fr Baum's work, but it proved most useful in the final stages of preparation.

Truth. The Church can in no way take the place of God as the motive of faith. We must never think of the Church as an intermediary in the sense of a substitute for God, as if our actual motive were the authority of the Church alone, which we could establish to our satisfaction to have the backing of God. No fear of illuminism must make us forget the theological character of faith and that the act of faith is, through grace, a meeting between God and each individual believer. Apart from being essential to any understanding of divine faith, a realization of the personal structure of faith and the divine encounter it involves will enable us to see something of the working of faith in those separated from the Church.

The Church enters in because of the way God has chosen to communicate Himself to men. To develop this. Faith comes from without. That means that the object of faith, together with the signs that accredit it as from God, is presented to our minds from outside by preaching and by the testimony of witnesses. If we are to believe, God must speak to us. He must make a revelation. He does this by putting before us from without by the action of men and by external and perceptible means a message claiming to be from God and marked by signs of its divine origin. The total object of faith is presented in this way; in the economy of the Christian faith—we are not speaking of the process of immediate revelation—there is no direct action of God that places any new object of faith before the mind. But there is a direct action of God on the soul in faith. Faith is supernatural and requires the grace of God. To believe, a person must receive the interior grace of God. This grace of faith is a divine enlightenment of the mind that enables it to interpret what confronts it from without, to recognize the message as the Word of God and to give to it as the communication of God's Truth the assent of faith. It is interesting to note that this interior enlightenment also used to be called revelation. The divine revelation to which our faith is a response includes both the presentation of the object from without and the action of God from within. Such is the way God communicates Himself to men. In and through such a revelation He offers Himself to each one for the personal union of faith. He, uncreated Truth, remains the motive which our act attains; the created means

He uses—the external signs and testimony, the graces—form the necessary conditions on which faith depends.

And what is the part of the Church? God set up the Church as the universal and infallible witness of His total revelation. The Church here simply continues the work of Christ. When God the Son became man, the Word of God was made present in this world in the thoughts, words and actions of a man. Christ was the Word of God. Faith is always to surrender the mind to the Truth of God and to measure one's thought on the thought of God. Faith now has become as well to surrender to Christ and to measure one's thoughts on the thought of Christ. It is not simply a question of accepting a list of truths on the testimony of Christ. What is necessary is a surrender to the all-embracing authority of Christ as being the incarnation of the living Word of God and the total revelation of God to men. The Church is the extension of Christ. He established His followers as one community, hierarchically organized, and committed to this community the fullness of His revelation. That community was to persist in this world to the end of time and was to possess always and without fail in the unity of its faith the integral revelation of Christ. This is why the faith of the Church is infallible. It must be, as the permanent embodiment in this world of the revelation given in Christ. It is also the reason for the promise of infallibility given to the *magisterium*. In an infallible Church those who have the power and function to proclaim authoritatively and to judge definitively the deposit of faith possessed by the Church must be infallible.

The Church thus exists as the universal witness to the truth of Christ. Her faith always represents the integral revelation of Christ. To measure our thought on the thought of the Church is to measure it on the thought of Christ. To submit to the faith and teaching of the Church is to submit to the truth of Christ. We must surrender our minds in faith to the Church as we would surrender them in faith to Christ. Or, rather, we surrender them to Christ in the Church. To believe the Church is, in this sense, to believe God. Not that the Church is the motive of faith, or that we only encounter the Church not God in faith, but that God is present in the Church as He was present in Christ and we meet Him in and through the Church. He comes

to us across the testimony of the Church. The Church is the place of our encounter; it is the instrument of God's communication. The testimony of the Church conditions the manner in which we reach the motive of our faith. Divine faith involves a surrender to God as First Truth; Christian faith is essentially the same faith, but it adds the characteristic of a surrender to Christ as the Incarnate Word of God; Catholic faith is again essentially the same, but it adds the characteristic of a surrender to the Church as the permanent embodiment of the truth of Christ.

This mediation of the object of faith by the Church has two aspects. First, she has within herself all the signs of credibility designed by God to lead men to the faith. The Church has without fail in her faith and teaching the full truth of Christ. She is the extension of Christ. His Body, united to Him in a mysterious union of life. For these reasons, the various signs of credibility are present within her and point to her. There are the signs inherent in her doctrine: its sublimity, harmony and divine wisdom; the signs manifesting the strength and fruitfulness of her life based on that doctrine: her holiness, unity, catholicity and stability; then, the miracles and charismatic gifts bestowed on her from time to time. The Church stands in the world, drawing men to the truth of Christ. Her own children are never left without abundant signs of her divine origin. Second, the Church is the guardian and rule of faith. The object of faith is complex; there are many truths to be believed. The individual believer tends to go astray, to mix error with the divine message and to be confused by the problems and questions to which the faith gives rise. The Catholic has in the Church an infallible guide. The closer he unites himself to the faith of the Church the purer will be his faith. Guided and instructed by the Church, his faith can steadily grow and become increasingly explicit. This greater explicitness will give him a fuller grasp of the truth of Christ and enrich his life of faith. Questions can be definitively settled when this is necessary. Obscurities do arise and do create difficulties and cause harm, but the divine message remains intact and the Catholic knows that in the faith of the Church he has always the integral revelation of Christ.

This account of the Church and faith may have seemed inordinately long, but it allows us to tackle the question of the

faith of dissident Christians with greater ease. The principle which governs their situation is that they still receive faith through the mediation of the Church, but this mediation is partially frustrated in regard to them. The mediation of the Church extends beyond its visible boundaries as a society. It does so, because the different dissident bodies retain in varying degrees elements that belong to the Church. Some of her possessions exist outside as well as inside her unity. All recognize that in relation to the sacrament of baptism. Baptism as a sacrament belongs to the Church; it is hers even when administered outside her unity, and it attaches anyone who receives it to her. There are other elements, similarly part of her divine inheritance, which are found not only within her visible unity but also outside of it. Among these elements are those that minister to faith.

What are the means through which our separated brethren hear the Gospel? Above all comes the Bible, the inspired Word of God, the very centre of all the teaching of the Church. A number of Catholic theologians, returning to the older tradition, even see the Bible as containing the plenitude of Christian revelation. Then there is preaching based on the Bible. This may draw as well on the past tradition of the Church and the past declarations of her teaching authority, though the extent to which this is so will vary considerably in the different Christian bodies. Indeed, the present teaching of the Church may be said to have its influence on some, who, while rejecting her full claims, allow themselves to be guided by her faith through the writings of her theologians or the decisions of her *magisterium*. Through all this the Church is able to fulfil partially her role as the *ministra fidei* and to place before dissident Christians the message of Christ. They do not recognize it as coming from her. They may be illogical, for example, in accepting the Bible, which is the Church's book, and rejecting the Church, but the important point here is that they have the Bible. Thus, owing to the Church and in various ways, they are confronted in part with the revelation of Christ. They have not its fullness and what they have is accompanied with error, but there is a sufficient presentation for an act of faith.

Such a presentation of the Christian message carries with it

sufficient though diminished signs of its credibility. There are the signs inherent in the doctrine itself and those connected with its fruitfulness in those who live by it. This fruitfulness results in the fact that, although the notes of the Church can be found all together and in their fullness only in the Catholic Church, some degree of them may be present in a dissident communion. It may not be possible to discern the total revelation of Christ apart from the true Church, but any reasonable theology of faith must admit the credibility present in a lesser presentation of the Christian message.

If the object of faith is there, the interior grace of faith is not lacking. Most will have received the virtue of faith by their baptism in childhood, and all the further graces necessary will be given by God. All such graces are given by God in relationship with the Church, and they attach the person to the Church. Any culpable refusal of the Church is then a refusal of these graces and a rejection of God. But where there is sincerity, a dissident Christian is given that interior grace which enables him to recognize the Word of God in the divine message put before him and to give to it the assent of faith. Despite the mutilated state of the message and the errors with which it is mingled in the person's mind, there takes place the personal encounter of faith, God using as the instrument of His communication the truth that is there and illuminating it with His grace. With the surrender to God, there is divine faith; where there is a surrender to Christ as God and Saviour there is Christian faith.

Several problems come to mind at once. How far has the principle of private judgement destroyed the motive of faith among Protestants? How can there be a true faith where the person's professed creed is full of error? What is the role in faith of the dissident churches as churches?

Faith only exists when the mind bows down before the authority of God. We speak rightly of the obedience of faith. It is a free assent and an assent made in darkness. This assent is not unreasonable because the mind is shown the credibility of the message; it sees that it is worthy of belief, sees, in fact, that it has a duty to accept it as from God. In faith, however, we do not assent to the message because we see its inner truth, or

because we like it or because it fits in with our personal ideas or because we regard it as socially or ethically helpful; we assent to it simply because it is the Word of God and we do so in an act that is a surrender of our minds to God as Truth. Faith is a personal decision, but it is not a private choice of creed. The principle of choosing for oneself and insisting on an autonomy of personal judgement is inimical to faith and ultimately destructive of it. Is the attitude of Anglicans and Protestants dominated by such a principle?

*Motive of faith*

The answer, I think, must be No. The mass of devout Anglicans and Protestants do not arrogate to themselves a freedom of choice before the Word of God but recognize the duty of submission. The basic attitude essential to faith is there and is manifested in their lives and in their writings. What obscures its presence, particularly to the eyes of many Catholics, and what in reality endangers it, is the absence of any clear rule of faith. We must not, however, in this matter confuse the motive and the rule of faith. That we must surrender our minds unconditionally to the Word of God in faith would be granted readily by our separated brethren. They think of this more easily in a personal form as a surrender to God or to Christ. That does not make their submission less authentic—far from it! But what is the Word of God and how are we to determine the content of the divine message? Here confusion reigns. The devout Protestant reading his Bible and convinced that God speaks to each man individually in its pages is often filled with a deep submissiveness to the Word of God, nor is he entirely wrong about the action of God in the Scriptures. He has a real faith. What he lacks is the recognition of the corporate rule of faith established by Christ. Catholics have as their rule of faith the faith and teaching of a Church indefectibly one and infallible. This is a rule of faith admirably adapted by its corporate and hierarchical character to strengthen and secure the basic attitude of faith, an attitude of surrender and obedience. In contrast, we all know the inadequate substitutes for this rule among dissident Christians: the appeal of the Bible privately interpreted, to the Church of the Fathers, to sound scholarship, to the consent of undivided Christendom and so on. This inadequacy has deplorable consequences for the object of faith and leads to the

multiplication of errors, but it can still leave intact the basic attitude of obedience to the Word of God. There will then still be an act of faith motivated by God's Truth.

Nevertheless, the absence of a clear rule of faith is a danger not only for the object of faith but also for its motive. The spirit and principle of free enquiry does not seem to have been specifically Protestant in origin. The following remark of the Protestant pastor, Max Thurian, is interesting, not only as asserting this, but also as a testimony to the modern Protestant attitude on the matter. He writes: "The doctrine of free examination has never been received in orthodox Protestantism and does not derive its foundation from the Reformers of the sixteenth century; it has had some fortune in the liberal theologies of the nineteenth century. The doctrine has bit by bit destroyed the true spirit of Protestantism."<sup>1</sup> The outlook in question originated, it seems, in the humanist Renaissance and the related cultural movements. However, as part of the cultural background of the time, it was bound to influence and to some extent coalesce with the Reformation break with authority. At any rate, all know the ravages it eventually caused, from the eighteenth century onwards, in the heyday of rationalism and liberal Protestantism, and, although there has been a strong and healthy reaction, the spirit is by no means dead. Now, it would be quite wrong to declare sweepingly that liberalism in religion destroyed faith in all who were infected by it. Few men are entirely consistent; most are influenced by principles to which they do not allow full play, and the grace of God is never lacking. But what can be asserted is that the mentality engendered in religion by rationalism and liberalism, with its anti-dogmatic prejudices, its arrogant claim to autonomy of reason, its rejection of the supernatural and its rebellion against all authority, is diametrically opposed to faith. Newman continually insisted on this. The Church has never underestimated the value of reason, even where revealed truth is concerned, and she has frequently stressed the complete compatibility between reason and faith. None the less it remains true that faith requires us to sacrifice the autonomy of our reason, and the sacrifice is mortifying because of the darkness of faith. Faith is a

<sup>1</sup>Quoted in *That They May Be One*, p. 150, n. 90.

surrender of mind that calls for humility and obedience, and fallen man does not always find this easy. To go beyond the sphere where reason can exult in its own light is hard to pride.

Catholics find this so. But Catholics are protected and helped in this matter by their rule of faith. We live the life of faith in union with the faith of the Church and subject to the authority of her hierarchy. The corporate, authoritative and clear character of this rule of faith provides a context and a discipline to our faith that strengthens its basic surrender. Our faith is in an environment where it can grow steadily greater in respect of its motive: that is, we can become increasingly surrendered to God, with the submission of faith more deeply rooted in our souls. It is the absence of a clear and adequate rule of faith that leaves dissident Christians exposed to tendencies that, in themselves, are destructive of faith. When there is no corporate rule of faith—and what does Anglican comprehensiveness mean but that—when the decision about the revealed character of different truths is left to a personal judgement, when the ultimate appeal is to human learning, so that scholars rather than the simple inherit the kingdom of heaven, the mind is ill-prepared for a surrender that sometimes goes against its personal preferences or is inimical to its cherished ideas, or, at the very least, goes beyond what we can judge for ourselves. The very principles which are opposed to faith are brought in alongside of it, in order to do service as the rule of faith. The sincere Christian life of so many shows that the danger to faith is often overcome by the grace of God. All the same, an important difference in situation between the faith of Catholics and that of dissident Christians is that the latter is continually threatened by forces that attack it in what it is by its very essence, a homage motivated simply by the unseen Truth of God.

But granted that, despite all, the motive of faith in sincere Christians outside the Church remains intact, what about the numerous errors in what they believe? How can there be a true faith where the creed professed is full of errors? It is useful here to recall a few principles. The virtue of faith, the theologians tell us, is infallible wherever it is found. What they mean is that the virtue of faith only draws us to what is truly divine revela-

tion, and that there cannot be an act of faith having error as its object. But because faith is infallible, it does not follow that each believer is infallible. The subject who possesses faith is not infallible, because he possesses faith only imperfectly and is not completely submissive to its influence. Faith does not lay full hold on his mind and he is but partially subject to its promptings. Other forces co-exist with faith in his mind and hamper and obscure its workings. Were a man completely possessed by faith and entirely subject to it, then it would give him a perfect discernment in matters of belief, but that is an ideal that is not realized. As it is, our imperfect faith can and does co-exist with errors. What is the result? A mental state or conviction where erroneous opinion and true belief come together in the mind in an organic unity. In a way that the believer himself cannot analyse, there is mixed up in his mind an object to which he is drawn by faith under the light of divine grace and various erroneous opinions which he holds for a variety of reasons. (We are leaving out of account here the clumsiness in conceptual formulation or verbal expression which may sometimes be found, owing to lack of training or even to the newness of a problem. Such clumsiness need not imply any intellectual error in the mind, whatever the appearances to the contrary.) The presence of error may be found in a Catholic believer—in fact, it is often found. An ordinary Catholic may have, intermingled with his understanding of Catholic doctrine owing to bad instruction, a number of false ideas. A theologian may be mistaken in holding a doctrine as of faith when it is not, or denying it when it is. No inculpable error of this kind destroys faith, though it does lessen the purity with which the object of faith is grasped. And we must not dismiss as of no significance the possession of a reasonably correct and full knowledge of the object of faith.

While all this is true, any genuine faith must, in a certain sense, be total in its grasp of revealed truth. The believer must accept, at least implicitly, all that God has revealed. The motive of faith demands this. The reason for our faith is the authority of God; our act of faith is a surrender to God as Truth. Were we to refuse to accept something which God has revealed, we would show that we had not so surrendered our minds. It would prove that what we did accept was not accepted in

homage to God as Truth but for some other motive. Faith then necessarily includes a willingness to accept everything that God has revealed; it therefore implicitly embraces the totality of divine revelation. To deny culpably but one article of faith is to destroy faith completely and to render impossible any true faith in the rest of revelation. But the denial of revealed truth may be inculpable; in that case faith remains. Then is found the paradoxical situation of a man implicitly believing what he explicitly denies. This would be a plain absurdity were the motive of our assent to the truths of faith our perception of their inner truth. But our motive is the authority of God, a motive extrinsic to the truths of faith, which leaves their inner truth unseen and in obscurity. It is possible for such a motive to cover implicitly matters that we do not yet know explicitly or which we, not knowing them to be revealed, deny on other grounds.

Even for a Catholic then, his true faith may not coincide with the creed or list of truths in which he professes belief. The Catholic Church is infallible, and the Catholic in his act of Catholic faith implicitly accepts all the Church teaches. The creeds of the Church, which the Catholic thus makes his own, are free from error. But if we asked an individual Catholic to sit down and write what he believed, his statement of his faith might well contain some surprising omissions and some remarkable errors. His creed, in the sense of his personal knowledge of the object of faith, is by no means always perfect. This indicates that there is, in fact, no particular difficulty in admitting that in the sincere non-Catholic a true divine faith co-exists with a professed creed that is riddled with errors. The same principles apply, although the errors and omissions are usually more numerous and more damaging. His faith is implicitly total, though his knowledge of its object is lamentably deficient and mingled with errors.

However, in a very important respect, he is situated differently from the Catholic. A Catholic is in a position which makes possible a steady and secure development of his faith and a purification of his mind from error. He believes in visible union with the one and infallible Church and in subjection to the divine rule of faith. He only has to unite himself closely to the life of the Church and draw as fully as he can on her life and

teaching, for his faith to grow and become ever more explicit, with a corresponding enrichment of his spiritual life, and for the errors due to his ignorance to be gradually rectified. We need not deny that such growth and purification has its own problems and is not always smooth, but the setting and means are there for normal development. On the other hand, the Christian separated from the Church receives his faith set in a framework of error and with no regular means of rectifying this. The dissident body from which he receives his faith owes its existence to error as well as to the truth it retains; it purveys error in the same way as it purveys truth. Error will be mingled with the truth in what surrounds the individual Christian and in what is given to him to nourish his Christian life. As he tries sincerely to live that Christian life, the grace of faith will exert its influence and power, but it will be hampered by the force of the errors in the dissident creeds, which will war against it and tend to destroy it. His faith can in fact only fully develop by breaking free of the environment which he has been taught to regard as inseparable from it. In the mental struggle that often ensues the normal external aids established by God are to a great extent lacking. His providence will not fail the sincere believer in his anomalous situation, but that situation is, all the same, anomalous and dangerous. It explains the dialectic of truth and error that marks the life of dissident Christians.

A Christian outside the unity of the Church receives his faith through his membership of some dissident Christian communion. Has then a dissident Church a part in mediating Christian faith? A simple Yes or No is not enough here. To determine theologically the exact status of the separated Christian Churches is a difficult problem, still under discussion. Clearly these are not members or branches of the Catholic Church. To hold otherwise would be to deny that the Catholic Church is the one true Church, preserving an unbroken unity. On the other hand, they are clearly societies possessing a certain historical and sociological identity. Are they, as societies, simply human in nature? In other words, is there outside the Catholic Church only a multitude of individual Christians, with nothing supernatural of an ecclesiastical nature? The existence of the Orthodox Churches, with all that there is of value in their

*Dissident  
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institutions, tradition and liturgy, forbids us to answer in the negative. In what sense can we answer in the affirmative?

We have seen that elements belonging to the Church, things which are part of her divine heritage, can continue to exist outside her unity. Such elements are not merely elements that concern the individual Christian as an individual. They are elements which bring Christians together and contribute to the work of building the Church. The dissident Churches unite in their structure as historical societies two different kinds of components. There are the heretical and schismatic components, to which they owe their existence as groups outside the unity of the true Church. There are the Christian components, such as baptism, the Bible, sometimes apostolic succession, various Christian traditions, customs and institutions, which give to these societies a partially Christian structure as societies. Something of the reality of a Christian church is found in them. The proportion of Christian components in their structure will vary enormously from one dissident group to another. The Orthodox Churches seem to have practically everything that forms a local church, while lacking that which integrates a local church into the unity of the one, universal Church. That is why Rome always refers to the dissident Eastern bodies as Churches, while it avoids the term in speaking of the Protestant bodies. A significant official usage, though it is not intended to prevent us, in ordinary usage, using the term "church" in a looser way. In both cases, however, we are confronted, not simply with a mass of individual Christians, but with groups that are partially Christian and supernatural in their structure and significance.

It is not surprising then to find that these Christian bodies do fulfil the task of making the revelation of Christ present in the world and bringing the truth of Christ to men. It is true that their role in this respect is ambivalent. They propagate their errors as well as the truth. That does not prevent their work achieving a sufficient presentation of the Gospel to give rise, under the grace of God, to a truly divine and Christian faith in their members and in those whom they convert. The resulting problem of the co-existence of error with faith has already been examined. This function of ministering to Christian faith belongs to them, not by that which separates them from the

Catholic Church, but by that which they still retain of her heritage. In the ultimate analysis, it is still the Catholic Church that is mediating the faith to those who receive it through the dissident bodies. She is doing so through elements that have never ceased to belong to her and that she can still claim as her own, but which are existing and continuing to bear fruit outside her visible unity as a society.

A consequence is that our attitude to the dissident Christian communions cannot be a simple one. Careful discernment is called for. We cannot dismiss in a single judgement their life and activity. It is quite unsound to rejoice in their decline or to lament their progress as if it were simply the progress or decline of error. When their progress is the progress of the Christian values they retain, it is in effect the progress of the Catholic Church. All that they have of Christian value and truth must be counted among the possessions of the Catholic Church, despite the anomalous condition of its existence. We must therefore rejoice in any progress in the separated Churches that marks an advance in what is truly Christian, while we must deplore anything that indicates a further encroachment of error. We must do what we can to preserve what they have that comes from Christ and through His Church, and help them to disentangle it from error. A simply negative approach is as much a betrayal of what we believe and hold dear as is a simply positive approach.

From the dissident churches we must turn again to their individual members and discuss the implications of their conversion to the Catholic Church. What, theologically speaking, is the nature of such a conversion? A matter of terminology must first be dealt with. For the Scholastics the term "heretic" always meant someone who was culpable in his denial of the faith; a heretic was one who was pertinacious, or sinfully obstinate, in his rejection of revealed doctrine. To speak of a heretic in good faith would have seemed as odd to them as, for example, to speak of a murderer in good faith seems to us. Likewise, "heresy" properly designated a sin not a mere error in doctrine, however serious. The same applied to the terms "schism" and "schismatic". A later terminology has, however, abstracted the element of guilt from these terms and given them a wider

application. "Heresy" can mean simply a doctrine opposed to a dogma of faith and a "heretic" one who holds such a doctrine, whether in good faith or bad faith. Hence, there can be innocent heretics as well as sinful heretics. Both terminologies are reflected in the *Code of Canon Law*, but it is interesting to notice that in the papal documents examined by Fr Baum the older usage is followed. The documents do not speak of heretical and schismatic churches or communities but of dissident churches or communities; they never speak of heretics in good faith but of dissidents or separated brethren.<sup>1</sup>

If we follow the older terminology, sincere non-Catholic Christians are not heretics or schismatics, whereas in the newer usage they are heretics or schismatics in good faith. The first usage seems preferable, if only to avoid arousing unnecessary resentment through the ambiguity of the terms and the infamy they implied in the past. We may speak then of dissident Christians. Dissidents in bad faith are heretics or schismatics; dissidents in good faith can be called more warmly our separated brethren. But what is more important than the terms used is the different nature of conversion in the case of these two different kinds of dissident Christians.

The heretic by his guilty rejection of revealed truth has lost his faith. He no longer has any Christian faith. If he still holds some Christian truths and is a heretic not an apostate, he does not hold them by supernatural faith. His conversion is a return to faith, which must be achieved by a repentance for his sin of heresy. Such repentance involves an abjuration of his heretical opinions. All repentance includes a detestation of the sin committed, and detestation for the sin of heresy means the abjuration of the heretical errors which the heretic has been guilty of holding. In his repentance the heretic receives once more the gift of faith. Such a conversion may be a return to the Catholic Church; it may, however, be a conversion to the Christian faith in some separated Church, where the presentation of the Christian faith on which it is based still remains imperfect.

The conversion to the Catholic Church of a dissident in good faith means something different. What is involved can best

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 143, n. i., and p. 68. For a full discussion of this question of terminology, see Charles Journet, *L'Église du Verbe Incarné*, II (Paris, 1951), pp. 708-18.

be described as a growth in Christian faith, leading to a crisis of faith and resulting in a return to the Church. It is a growth or an unfolding of faith. Such converts do not receive in their conversion the interior gift of faith; they already have it. Their conversion manifests an increase in the faith they possess. The increase is made notable by their new acceptance from the Church of the full content of Christian revelation, which they had until now only known in a mutilated form. Such an enrichment in the object of their faith will lead, if they co-operate with God's grace, to great progress in their life of faith and a consequent increase in the virtue of faith itself. Their faith also changes its situation by their reunion with the Church and submission to the divine rule of faith. But more of that in a moment. The point here is that their conversion is not a return to faith, using "faith" to mean the interior gift of divine faith, although it can be called a return to the faith, meaning by this the integral object of faith given by the teaching of the Church.

Such a conversion is usually the culmination of a long process of growth in faith. The growth will have had both a positive and a negative aspect. Positively, there must be an ever greater hold on the Christian truths already possessed; an increasing influence of these in the life of the person. Negatively, the influence of the errors in which the truths are enmeshed must weaken, and then eventually the errors are left aside. They are left aside; it is not a question of an abjuration of them, because they have never been pertinaciously held. (We are concerned here with the interior nature of conversion, not with the requirements of the external forum, determined by the canonists on different criteria.) A sincere Christian coming to the truth does not have to repent of his errors, because he has never guiltily held them. He simply gives them up when confronted with the truth. It is similar to the way a theological student, studying the treatise on grace and finding that he has held semi-Pelagian views, begins to make his own authentic Catholic teaching. The difference between the two cases will lie in the greater psychological difficulty and the consequent mental struggle of the convert, but such a struggle need not imply the least disloyalty to faith nor any guilty countenancing of error. If there has been some fault, say negligence, short of a sinful denial of revealed

truth, the convert must repent accordingly; such a repentance is still different in nature from an abjuration of heresy.

No attempt is being made here to simplify the incredible complexities of conversion as it actually occurs. The purpose is simply to indicate a few theological principles governing the matter. The growth referred to may be realized in an endless variety of ways. Sometimes it will be almost exclusively positive; the convert's faith has been perhaps of the vaguest kind and he simply advances steadily in his knowledge of Christian revelation, after he has made contact with the Catholic Church. For others, the negative side will be acutely marked, and they will only come to the Church after much searching and mental anguish. But in all cases, conversion must be said to involve a crisis of faith, however little or great be the spiritual disturbance caused by this. And for this reason. Every conversion must be a personal decision and in the choice which confronts the person the very existence of his faith is at stake. Faced with conversion, the person now sees his duty of accepting Catholic teaching as the revealed truth of God. He knows that he must assent to it as the Word of God and now realizes that the motive of his faith covers the Catholic claims. His faith remains a free assent; he can give it or refuse it. If he refuses, he destroys entirely the Christian faith he already possesses. Faith must be total; a refusal of one revealed truth is enough to extinguish it completely. The person has failed in the crisis and is now a heretic. On the other hand, if the person gives his assent, his faith is not only preserved but considerably strengthened. The resolution of the crisis then brings him into the unity of the Church. This changes the situation of his faith. It no longer exists in the anomalous and dangerous situation described above, but is now placed in the environment connatural to it, with the rule of faith and the other normal means established by God for its protection and development. He has not lost what he possessed but gained what he lacked. He had belonged to the Church in an initial and incomplete way; now he enjoys full membership.

While we must rejoice at the conversion to the Catholic Church of any of our separated brethren, it would be wrong to limit the task of the Church in regard to dissident Christians to one of convert-making. Our belief in the Catholic Church un-

doubtedly requires us to hold that the reunion of Christendom will mean the return of all Christians to the unity of the Catholic Church as the one, true Church of Christ. Our ultimate aim is and must be the return of all to the Church of Rome. Likewise, it is true that the absolute and revealed character of the Catholic claims means that, once recognized by a person, they imperiously demand the assent of his faith and reconciliation with the Church. Yet, unshakable as they are, these principles need supplementing when we try to determine our approach to the present complicated situation.

What are the facts? Millions of Christians are separated from the unity of the Church. They receive their Christian faith and live their Christian lives through the activity of the dissident Christian communions and in the setting of their institutions and traditions. This will continue, perhaps for a very long time, until—only God knows when and how—the reunion of Christendom is achieved. This is the situation that has called forth the ecumenical activity of the Church. What is meant by ecumenical activity? It is not the same as missionary activity properly so-called. The missions of the Church are directed to those who have not yet received the preaching of the Gospel and who, though they may have through the grace of God an implicit supernatural faith, have not a faith based on the presentation of the Christian message. In contrast to this, the ecumenical action of the Church is addressed to those who have already heard the Gospel and have a Christian faith, but who have yet to be brought into the unity of the Church of Christ. The distinction helps us to see the special character and needs of ecumenical work.

What must characterize ecumenical activity is the recognition of Christian faith and life in those to whom it is directed. An objective assessment of the task it faces must include an acknowledgement of the Christian elements present in the dissident communities. That determines its immediate aim, which must be to foster and encourage all that is true and valuable in the separated Churches and to assist in eliminating the errors. This is a wider task than that of making converts. Those to whom God gives the grace of conversion are to be helped and welcomed by us. Their return is often a providential aid to the

Church in her ecumenical activity. But an over-eagerness to make converts must never lead us to despise or to trample upon anything that is truly Christian in the separated Churches. The Christian elements they retain belong really to the Church, and it is our duty to cherish them. Apart from this, healing is always achieved by the strengthening of life; our separated brethren will be brought to the fullness of the truth by the growth of the life they possess and not by its decay. And when the fruits of their Christian life and traditions are brought eventually within the unity of the Church, her life will be enriched. We know well enough that the Church, in her unbroken unity and indefectibility, has lost nothing essential by the damage inflicted by heresy and schism, but this does not exclude the fact that the return of all Christian gifts, now found in a state of separation, will be a real benefit to her life. Part of our task is to see that these gifts do not meanwhile perish.

The missionary work of the Church requires a sympathy, knowledge and appreciation of all that is sound in the customs and traditions of the peoples to whom it brings the Gospel. What sympathy, knowledge and appreciation are needed when confronted with the fruits of Christian faith in our separated brethren! The fact that these are marred with the fruits of error does not mean that we can be content with an attitude of opposition. What is called for is a work of delicate discernment, which will enable us to encourage what is true and combat what is false. The task demands an enlightened Christian charity. How far are we in this country fulfilling it?

CHARLES DAVIS

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#### A CENTRE FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

IN the Catholic Press recently there appeared an announcement from Archbishop's House, Westminster, that the hierarchy had approved the establishment of a national catechetical Centre at the Catholic Training College in Cavendish Square. As the Centre will be of great benefit to the clergy and will itself

be dependent on their co-operation, perhaps some account of its origin and aims, as at present envisaged, will be appreciated by the readers of this REVIEW.

Two years ago an international conference on religious teaching was held in Antwerp at which were present about two dozen English people, for the most part unknown to each other, but soon drawn together by their common interest in religious education. Impressed by what they saw and heard of the work being done in other countries, they expressed among themselves the desire to see established at home some centre to co-ordinate efforts for the improvement of religious teaching. Fortunately, Canon Drinkwater was at the Conference, and all the others looked to him as the one person able and qualified to pursue the idea and enlist support for it. And he who has laboured long in this field of the apostolate promised to see what he could do. He first explained the idea to certain responsible people engaged in Catholic education and thereby gathered a number of patrons. Thanks to the generosity of the Religious of the Holy Child Jesus, he was promised the use of premises in their Training College. Thus encouraged the Canon sought an interview with his Lordship the Bishop of Salford and begged him to submit the project to the hierarchy at their Low Week meeting. His Lordship did so, and the bishops approved in principle of the project. Thereupon the Canon withdrew—or tried to withdraw—into the background.

From that stage onwards Bishop Beck took the initiative. Through the Catholic Education Council he planned and organized a Conference to be held at St Mary's College, Strawberry Hill, in July of last year to which were invited representatives from organizations engaged in the religious education of young Catholics. As a result, delegates came from Seminaries, Training Colleges, the Catholic Teachers Federation, the Conference of Catholic Colleges, the Association of Convent Schools, the Board of Diocesan Inspectors, Schools Commissioners, Our Lady's Catechists, the Y.C.W., the Grail, the Legion of Mary, etc. Altogether some 120 people took part. One could not hope for a more representative gathering; the contacts made and the discussions held proved to be of value to everyone. From the opinions expressed during this Conference Week may

be gathered together some of the reasons for setting up a national Centre.

There is taking place throughout the Catholic world a renewal in religious teaching. Much research and experimentation is going on and a vast literature being produced. But individual schools in England and even Training Colleges cannot be expected to keep abreast of all that is being done; indeed, it is often merely by accident that one learns of noteworthy activities in our own midst. Seminaries have only vague ideas of what is being done in Training Colleges and vice versa; a similar haziness exists among apostolic lay groups concerned with the religious formation of the young. Hence it was felt highly desirable that there should be some clearing house of information. A national Centre could be a great help in this work; here the lecturers in Seminaries and Training Colleges, school-teachers, lay catechists could meet separately or jointly, exchange information, discuss their work and problems. Not only that; all over the country, priests, heads of schools, religious teachers, voluntary catechists, each with their particular difficulties and usually slender resources, would like to have some one from whom they could seek information and advice in matters concerned with religious teaching. The providing of information is, then, one main reason for opening the Centre.

The need for co-ordination is another. At the Conference it became more than ever manifest that various groups and individuals were working on similar lines and tackling the same problems independently of each other. There was felt to be a waste of effort here. If we had some co-ordination in the many and varied activities that are being carried out in Training Colleges, schools and lay groups, greater and better results could be confidently expected. The Holy See has in recent years made large demands on the already crowded seminary course. The professors of Catechetics would no doubt gain by exchanging views on how these Roman directives can best be implemented in our own country and by enlisting the help of visiting lecturers. Training Colleges, according to the Principal of Strawberry Hill, have hitherto suffered from lack of contact with each other; but they have now seen the advantage of coming together to plan the new arrangements for the three-

year course which becomes obligatory in 1960. Then again, Our Lady's Catechists are specifically concerned with children going to non-Catholic schools; to these we must add certain members of the Legion of Mary. Catholic teachers in these schools, and probably a host of voluntary lone workers up and down the country. They deserve whatever help and support can be given them. Here again, some co-ordination of effort would be an advantage to this form of apostolate.

Among other needs that found expression was that of courses for different types of catechists. Priests, as Bishop Beck reminded us, share in the divine commission to teach which Christ gave to His Church. But though they have had four years of theological training, they are often ill-equipped pedagogically to teach young children. Pius XII wanted them to have a "thorough grounding in psychology and pedagogy, didactics and catechetics . . . in keeping with the most modern developments in all these fields" (*Apostolic Constitution: Sedes Sapientiae*, 31 May 1956). Teachers in schools ask for "refresher" courses and courses in doctrine to widen and deepen their religious knowledge. Earnest pleas have been made on behalf of handicapped and maladjusted children: help for the guidance of parents and teachers of these children needs to be provided. Voluntary lay catechists who have not been to any Training College would welcome sessions of intensive training on how to conduct a catechism class. Catholic graduates who have done their training at a University Department of Education do not receive the course in religious doctrine they would have had in a Catholic establishment; some of them feel acutely the lack of adequate preparation for taking a religion class, even though they pass the bishop's knowledge test.

To improve the standard of religious teaching at all levels, there is also need for study and research. Theology and catechesis are not the same; they differ in object and method. Yet one of the weaknesses of our teaching is that we have been too much influenced by the scholastic spirit and outlook; it accounts for the analytical, notional presentation of religion which goes over the heads of pupils and fails to touch their hearts. We need a deepened study of the nature of revealed truth. This is done thoroughly enough in the Seminaries, but from the angle of

truth: the theologian gathers and classifies the various revealed truths, compares them with naturally known truths, draws conclusions, solves difficulties, endeavours to throw light on obscurities and so on. All this is important and very necessary. But that same Word of God which is studied in theology has to be proclaimed to every creature as a good news calling for a response. The exigencies of catechesis call for a study of Revelation from the angle of *life* as well as of truth. Therefore, we need a kerygmatic as well as a Scholastic approach to theology. At present we do not seem to have done very much in this country; but what is being done might well be made available for preachers and teachers.

Modern psychology is throwing more and more light on educational problems and methods. We need research in religious psychology. Hitherto such study has apparently been for the most part restricted to the psychology of the mystics and the methods used have been historical and phenomenological. Nowadays, Catholics in various countries are stressing the importance for religious pedagogy of character psychology (the diversity in human approach and sensibility towards religious values), development psychology (the specific mental structures of each age-group) and clinical psychology (individual problems and personal conflicts underlying acceptance of religious truths and behaviour). Already the Mount Pleasant Training College at Liverpool has taken steps to introduce a course along these lines. One can easily understand the help to religious educators that would come from an assimilation of the truths of modern psychology.

To these studies may be added research in religious sociology. Religious practise is partly supernatural and partly natural. In so far as it is natural, it can be studied scientifically and turned to apostolic purposes. Yet apart from the Newman Demographic Survey, a few studies in *New Life* and *THE CLERGY REVIEW*, what else has been done in England? Not only Schools Commissioners but school-teachers would greatly benefit from a scientific study of influences favourable and unfavourable to religion.

The reasons justifying the establishment of a Centre suggest its possible activities. What do we hope to do?

Before answering this question we would like to correct a mistaken notion which we have already found entertained by a number of people. They think that the Centre exists to "work on the catechism" in the sense of revising or re-writing the catechism text. The word "catechetical" seems to have misled them. The work of the Centre is much wider than that; besides, the hierarchy set up a commission two years ago for that purpose. No doubt, the team of workers at the Centre are vitally interested in the work of revision and will gladly co-operate, if requested; but our aim is wider; it is the improvement of religious education. This term covers also people before and after their "catechism years", and it indicates both instruction and formation.

Being national, the Centre set up in London must be careful not to become metropolitan. Therefore, we hope to establish and maintain contact with various agencies spread over the country. One practical way would be to have branches in certain large towns; or, better still, where diocesan catechetical offices exist, as urged by the Roman Decree *Provido sane* (1935), the national Centre could work through them. No one gets such a close overall view of religious teaching at all levels as diocesan inspectors who go into many different classrooms. They see where good work is being done and what are the lacunae; their co-operation with the work of the Centre would be of immense value, and the Centre itself would in return render whatever services it could.

A primary aim of the Centre is to provide information and advice. This involves among other things that we build up a specialist library in catechetics and find a team of expert reviewers who will sift the wheat from the chaff in the literature that is appearing. The problem here, of course, is expense; but if our experience proves to be like that of other national Centres, publishers will probably send copies of their catechetical works as the Centre becomes known for the services it renders. Along with books we include periodicals, so that the best ideas that are being mooted and experiments that are being made, both at home and abroad, may be more widely circulated.

Likewise, it is hoped to provide information on the value of the many visual aids that are becoming more and more

numerous. Take, for example, film-strips. One has a choice of strips on, let us say, the Passion. That of a certain firm is highly praised; a headmaster buys it for his juniors, but it is unsuitable for them, and none of the teachers in the senior classes use film-strips. It is put aside and never used again. Or again—these are actual cases—a series of pictures of foreign origin are excellent in themselves, but there are Italian or French peculiarities which fix the attention of the pupil and the main impression intended by the teacher is lost. The Centre hopes to enlist the help of severely critical judges of all types of illustrations with different age-groups in mind. On the premises it is hoped to have a display room for visual aids and didactic material. Now and again one hears of individuals who have made their own films and strips, which are of high quality; perhaps we could obtain their collaboration.

The answering of enquiries started within a very few days of the announcement in the Press that the Centre was to be set up. A postal service of information and advice is obviously one aspect of the work which will go on increasing. To do this well, we shall need a panel of specialists for infants, juniors, seniors in various types of schools. Happily, a few well-qualified persons have already offered their services; we shall need more as the work grows.

In the matter of co-ordination the Centre will do its best to act as liaison, if requested, between those bodies already concerned with the teaching of religion. Moreover, as only a fraction of the 200,000 Catholic children in non-Catholic schools are being catered for, and the number is going to leap higher, it seems that the apostolate of the voluntary lay catechist needs to be expanded. Saturdays and Sundays, the two days when the children are free, are the two most inconvenient days for priests. At present we have Our Lady's Catechists, the Birmingham Guild of Catechists and isolated apostles recruited by their parish priests. If we are to raise more catechists, we must see that they are qualified intellectually, pedagogically and spiritually. The Centre hopes to study this question and promote the apostolate in conjunction with those priests who are faced with this harassing problem.

Besides information and co-ordination, the Centre hopes to

arrange courses for different categories of people and according to special needs. We have in mind correspondence courses for lay catechists living perhaps in remote areas. Then there will be intensive courses for these voluntary workers, and extended courses for teachers and others who can spare one night a week. These are some of the needs which have already been voiced. In some cases this project will come under co-ordination, since some bodies do arrange lectures for religion teachers. The important thing is that there be a regular source, so that priests can use it or point it out to teachers and catechists. One course of training for Sunday School catechists has just been started at Holy Rood House, Regent's Park, on Friday evenings.

Sooner or later the Centre will have to set up a publications department giving reports of its activities and of the catechetical movement as a whole, providing a selected bibliography, describing more important experiments, offering doctrinal articles and aids to teachers. The particular form which such a periodical will take does not yet need to be determined, because we must take into account the existing publications and the financial risk of adding to the market.

It is useful to know what is being done in national Centres abroad. If we choose those of France and Holland, this is only because the present writer has visited these Centres and had interviews with their directors. The Lumen Vitae Centre in Brussels is omitted because it is international in aim and character.

In France the hierarchy has established a legislative body, the Episcopal Commission for Religious Teaching, consisting of eight bishops, and also a consultative body, the National Commission for Religious Teaching, consisting of twelve priest-experts in catechesis with the Archbishop of Tours as its president. The latter has seven sub-commissions specializing in the training of catechists, syllabus-making, illustrations, pastoral problems affecting children, handicapped children, technical students, adults. The National Centre is the executive of the Episcopal and National Commissions. Here at least seven people are occupied full time, three secretaries being barely sufficient to answer enquiries, send out circulars, stencil documents. The Centre has a library to which any catechist may go

for documentation. Its quarterly publication, *Documentation Catéchistique*, gives official statements of the various bishops on catechetical matters as well as papal documents, information of catechetical movement in the dioceses, doctrinal articles, book reviews. The Centre also helps in the organization of intensive courses for catechists, arranges meetings of the above-mentioned commissions, and puts out a number of small publications.

A big post-war development has been the *Journées Nationales de l'Enseignement Religieux* and the *Congrès de l'Enseignement Religieux*. To the *Journées* only delegates from dioceses are allowed to come. They discuss a particular problem which they have been asked to study several months ahead. For example, in 1958 the topic was: different kinds of catechists. There were 420 participants from eighty dioceses. The *Congrès* is a mammoth affair. Catechists of any and every shade are invited to meet together, pray together, listen to learned lecturers, take part in "workshops", which are unwieldy discussion groups. Thus, at the 1957 Congress there were nearly 5000 people taking part. Organized by the National Commission the labour of preparing them falls on the Centre.

The Dutch Centre at Nijmegen is perhaps more interesting to us because the school situation in Holland is closer to our own. The Canisius Centre was founded soon after the War to promote improvements in religious instruction. It brought out two monthlies, *Verbum* for priests, and *School in Godsdienst* for teachers in primary schools. In 1954 the hierarchy together with the Superiors of all men's Orders and Congregations founded the Higher Catechetical Institute and placed it under the administration of the Centre with Mgr Op de Coul as chairman. Consequently, as the same priest is director of the Centre and Institute which are in the same building, the distinction tends to disappear. The aim of the Institute, as stated in the conspectus, is (a) the broadening and deepening of the religion teacher's professional knowledge; (b) scientific research for the benefit of those who direct the teaching of religion. In pursuance of the first aim the Centre runs two courses. One is for priests (the majority of curates teach in schools) from mid-October to the end of May, taking up the whole of Tuesdays.

There are three series of lectures, one on Theology and Catechesis (45), another Pedagogy and Psychology in Catechesis (26), the third method (19). Besides attending four lectures a day the priests spend an hour and a half in discussion under the guidance of one of the lecturers. They are also expected to put in several hours private study each week. Yet in spite of the heavy programme the list of applicants is filled many months ahead. The lecturers, by the way, are from Nijmegen University and various religious Orders.

The other course (forty-two lectures) is for lay teachers; it covers the Aim and Structure of Religious Education, Orientation of Religious Instruction, Method, given for the most part by members of the Centre.

In connexion with the second aim mentioned they answer requests for advice, maintain a catechetical library (10,000 volumes), and display the different kinds of material aids.

At the Centre itself there is a team of seven priests and two laymen. Fr Bless is director, and at the same time member of seven episcopal commissions! One priest specializes in the theory and another in the practice of primary-school teaching. A third specializes in secondary schools, a fourth is editor of the two monthly magazines, a fifth, the theologian of the group, goes about giving courses of theology to lay people, and the sixth goes round the country giving talks to parents at evening gatherings organized through the schools in co-operation with the parish priest. One layman and an assistant handle the large correspondence in which advice is sought.

How are these Centres financed? The French Centre is maintained by the hierarchy out of the royalties from the national catechism. The Dutch Centre lives by the sales of its own publications (textbooks, magazines, teachers aid-books).

To return to our own Centre. It is a venture of faith. It can only succeed with the grace of God and the co-operation of as wide a number of people as possible. We look to Seminary professors to be our theological advisers. We rely on diocesan inspectors and the parish clergy to support our efforts by keeping us informed of needs and encouraging teachers to make use of the services that are offered. We count on the help of teachers. They are the practitioners, close to the pupil, and sensitive to

urgent needs. They will prevent us from becoming merely theoretical, and ensure that we remain concrete and practical. They could help us enormously by trying out suggested lesson-schemes and then pooling their experiences; out of the joint discussion and experimentation they would achieve definite practical results which would contribute to progress in this apostolate. The staffs of Training Colleges could likewise perform a useful function by trying out proposed schemes in the training of their students and in the schools in Teaching Practice, as also by suggesting schools which to their knowledge would be willing to co-operate in working out suggested schemes. Finally, Catholic societies, such as the Union of Catholic Mothers, the Young Christian Workers, the Grail, etc., all concerned in one way or another with the religious training of the young, could without detriment to their own spirit give support to our common aim: the handing on of the Faith. It would be a lamentable mistake to regard the Centre as an entity separate from existing institutions and organizations for religious education. It is at their service and is itself dependent on them for its successful functioning. No doubt, there will arise differences of opinion about priorities and methods of work; for that reason the Centre must preserve a certain independence and autonomy, remembering that it is first and foremost an instrument of the hierarchy, the sole official teachers in the Church.

FRANCIS SOMERVILLE, S.J.

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## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### COLLECTIVE GUILT AND TOTAL WAR

Even in a just war of self-defence, indiscriminate nuclear destruction of the enemy's cities is said to be immoral, because it involves direct killing of the innocent along with the guilty. Some rebut this argument by claiming that, in modern conditions, the whole population of an aggressor State shares in

the guilt of its rulers and armed forces, and therefore that the traditional distinction between innocent and guilty is no longer valid. Is this claim defensible? (H.)

## REPLY

It was certainly not the opinion of the late Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, that the distinction between innocent and guilty had ceased to be valid in the conditions of modern war. In his sermon of 24 December 1939, among "acts irreconcilable . . . with the principles of the natural law and the most elementary sentiments of humanity", he numbered "the illicit use of means of destruction even against non-combatants and refugees, against old people, women and children".<sup>1</sup> In a later Christmas broadcast, 24 December 1942, he referred to "the many thousands of non-combatants, women, children, infirm and aged, whom the aerial warfare—the horrors of which we have many times denounced from its very beginning—has, without discernment or with insufficient consideration, deprived of their life, goods, health, homes, places of charity and of prayer".<sup>2</sup> To the College of Cardinals, 2 June 1943, he deplored the fact that "often in this war the moral judgement on certain actions contrary to law and humanity is made to depend on the side to which the responsible party belongs, without regard to whether or not they are conformed to the norms sanctioned by the Eternal Judge; while the embitterment of the technique of war and the progressive growth of the use of weapons which do not discriminate between so-called military and non-military "objectives" themselves remind us of the dangers involved in the sad and inexorable competition between actions and reprisals".<sup>3</sup>

The moral manualists, in general slow to catch up with the times, offer little guidance on this point, but Regatillo-Zalba has no hesitation in writing: "Total war is unlawful. The reason is that, however just it may have been in its origin, it can never justify intrinsically immoral means, such as the direct

<sup>1</sup> *A.A.S.*, 1940, XXXII, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> *A.A.S.*, 1943, XXXV, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

killing of so many innocent people, and so many other crimes contrary to natural, divine and human law, which provoke general horror when they come to be known and were frequently condemned by Pius XII during the last world war.<sup>1</sup> And on the subject of collective guilt he has this to say: "Collective guilt which, after the manner of original sin, weighs upon each and all of the citizens of a belligerent State, even though they may have played no effective part in the inception or prosecution of the war, is utterly inadmissible in the realm of ethics."<sup>2</sup>

We know of no reputable Christian philosopher or theologian who would dispute this statement. It is a cardinal principle, alike of our philosophy and of our theology, that every human being is primarily a person, i.e. an *ens sibi existens*. True, he is also a social being, bound by his God-given nature to work together with his fellows in a civic society organized for the common good of all, but he does not exist for the benefit of that or any other society.<sup>3</sup> He exists for himself, not, of course, in the sense that he is his own ultimate end—ultimately, like everything created, he exists for the glory of God, but in the sense that God created him for an eternal destiny which he alone, once he has come to the use of reason, can achieve by his own individual and morally responsible co-operation with divine grace. He cannot justly be subordinated as a means to the end of any other person or group of persons; and if his nature requires him to belong to a civic society and subordinate his immediate interests to the common good, it is in order that he may the better achieve his own ultimate personal destiny.

It follows from this primacy of personal responsibility that the individual citizen of whatsoever State, race, or nation, can only be to blame for his own personal actions, just as he can only merit by them. The sins of the State, race, or nation to which he belongs, or of the Government to which he is subject,

<sup>1</sup> *Theol. Mor. Summa*, II, n. 291.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, II, n. 289, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Rejecting the claim that the State has an absolute right over the education of its members, Pius XI wrote: "Untenable is the reason they adduce, namely that man is born a citizen and hence belongs primarily to the State, not bearing in mind that before being a citizen man must exist; and existence does not come from the State, but from the parents" (*Enc. Divini Illius Magistri*, 31 December 1929; *C.T.S.* translation, p. 15).

cannot be imputed to him, unless and *in the measure in which* he makes them his own by formal co-operation. It is necessary to stress the clause—"the measure in which", because, in these days of universal suffrage, it is sometimes glibly assumed that those who vote a government into power co-operate formally in, and thereby incur moral responsibility for, every misdeed of which it may subsequently be guilty. There is no justification for this generalization. In the first place, not every such misuse of power is foreseen by the electorate, and nothing unforeseen can be imputable; *nil volitum nisi praecognitum*. In the second place, the casting of a vote does not of itself indicate approval of evil effects which are foreseen as likely to follow from it. Often enough it merely indicates a preference for the party or regime which, in the opinion of the voter, is likely to do less evil and more good. Such a vote involves no more than material co-operation in the foreseen evil effects, and, since this degree of co-operation is justified in the circumstances, the voter cannot be held morally responsible for the evil that may ensue. Not every German therefore who voted for Hitler was morally responsible for the gas chambers of Auschwitz, no more than every Briton who voted for the war-time government of this country was responsible for the obliteration of Hamburg, or every American democrat for Hiroshima.

On the other hand, to deny that all the citizens of a State which has unjustly begun or waged a war incur personal guilt, irrespectively of their individual complicity, is not to claim for them absolute immunity from all the penalties justly incurred by the juridical person of the State which they constitute. A war is a corporate act, "multitudinis ad multitudinem",<sup>1</sup> involving, when it is unjust, a corporate guilt which warrants corporate repressive measures and punishment. But, because its citizens are primarily persons, a distinction must be drawn between their right to life and physical integrity and their right to their external goods. The former is inalienable, until forfeited by personal crime, but not so the latter. While they remain personally innocent, they cannot justly be killed or maimed for the good of the community by direct act, but they can be directly deprived of their property for a sufficient reason of

<sup>1</sup> St Thomas, *Summa Theol.*, 2a 2ae, qu. XLII, a. 1.

social necessity. It follows that a just belligerent against their State can directly confiscate or destroy their property, in so far as this is necessary to its honest purpose; "ratio est, quia cum sint pars reipublicae, possunt propter huius delicta puniri *in iis bonis quae reipublicae subsunt*".<sup>1</sup> It can justly expose even their lives and limbs to indirect violence, when this is an inevitable consequence of a necessary attack directed against the armed forces and war potential of their State. But in no circumstances may it directly kill or maim them. Their lives and limbs, not being State property, cannot be forfeited by their State's crime, and, *ex hypothesi*, have not been forfeited by their own. No valid argument to the contrary can be drawn from the command of the Lord to Josue to destroy every man, woman and child in Jericho, or to Saul to wipe out the Amalecites.<sup>2</sup> The Lord of Life can authorize the direct taking of innocent life, but He alone.

#### SPECIAL COLLECTIONS—PARISH PRIEST'S FUNCTION

Has a parish priest, as administrator of parochial property, any discretionary power over the allocation and disposal of money collected or contributed for specified purposes? If the ordinary church collection has suffered from the competition of a special collection, can he deduct from the latter the amount necessary to bring the former up to its normal level? (S. P.)

#### REPLY

Canon 1514: "Voluntates fidelium facultates suas in piis causas donantium vel relinquentium, sive per actum inter vivos, sive per actum mortis causa, diligentissime impleantur etiam circa modum administrationis et erogationis bonorum, salvo praescripto can. 1515, §3."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> St Alphonsus, *Theol. Mor.*, III, n. 409. (Italics added.)

<sup>2</sup> Josue, vi, 17; I Kings xv, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Canon 1515, §3, prescribes that clauses contrary to the local Ordinary's right to act as supervisory executor of pious bequests are to be ignored.

Canon 2348: "Qui legatum vel donationem ad causas pias sive actu inter vivos sive testamento, etiam per fiduciam, obtinuerit et implere negligat, ab Ordinario, etiam per censuram, ad id cogatur."

The answer to both questions must be a firm and unqualified negative. In the first place, special collections for extra-parochial purposes never even come within the administrative competence of the parish priest, because they never become parish property. The money contributed remains the property of the donors until it is accepted by those for whom it was given, or by the administrators of the pious cause for which it was solicited. The parish priest is simply an intermediary, "a *longa manus* of the owner",<sup>1</sup> with a mandate from the ecclesiastical authority to collect donations for the specified purpose, and a fiduciary commission from the donors to deliver their property to its pre-determined destination. The same applies to money contributed for pious purposes within the parish, such as "St Anthony's Bread", which are neither owned by the moral person of the parish, nor administered as pious foundations by the parish priest. Thus, money placed in a box marked with this particular label is never at any moment parish money; it belongs to the donors until it is received by the poor for whom it was intended. The parish priest has merely a trust to fulfil, which he has undertaken by the very fact of nominating the pious cause.

Furthermore, even when a collection has been made for the benefit of a specified parochial property, such as the building of a church tower, a school, a hall, etc., or the renovation or decoration of such property, the parish priest's right and duty to administer parochial property does not give him any discretionary power over the substantial allocation or disposal of the money so received. "All offerings, contributions and donations of any kind, made by the faithful for pious causes, must be scrupulously allocated in their entirety to the end pre-determined by the donor and benefactor, nor has anyone the right to divert or devote them to other works without a manifest violation of justice."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> T. Goffi, in *La Rivista del Clero Italiano*, November 1956, p. 598.

<sup>2</sup> Beate, *Introductio in Codicem*, 1956, p. 809.

That this is the law of the Church is clear from the plain wording of canon 1514. That it also binds *sub gravi* can be gauged both from the emphatic nature of the command—"diligentissime impleantur", and from the duty imposed on Ordinaries to enforce its fulfilment by censure, if need be. But it is not merely a canonical obligation, because the canons simply enunciate and enforce what is already obligatory by natural and divine law. Thus, when, in 1807, a Vicar-Apostolic of Cochin China requested for his missionaries a general faculty to commute to other and more useful purposes offerings made by the faithful for specific objects, the Holy See gave the following reason for its refusal: "Postulat imprimis ius naturale et divinum; iubent canonicae, civilesque leges; pluribus denique in locis studiose commendat Sacrosancta Synodus Tridentina, ut voluntates fidelium, facultates suas in pias causas donantium vel relinquentium, diligentissime impleantur, et in eos precise usus, iuxta modum conditionesque iis benevisas, pecunia inde obventa insumatur ad quos destinata fuit, neque in alios convertatur, etsi meliores utilioresque videantur; si secus fieret, fidelium voluntates, quae pro lege habenda sunt, fraudarentur, ipsique, magno cum Ecclesiae detimento, a piis huiusmodi largitionibus retraherentur."<sup>1</sup>

The Congregation went on to admit that the Apostolic See, by virtue of its supreme jurisdiction, could commute the destination of offerings of the faithful, but it added that it could only do so for a just and reasonable cause, and that, since the Supreme Pontiff was himself bound by this law, he could not normally depute inferiors to judge individual cases, without the danger of himself being held by God to blame for their sins of misjudgement. In the event, owing to the difficulty at that time of having recourse to the Holy See from so distant a land, the Pope granted a restricted faculty of commutation to the Vicar-Apostolic himself, but only for urgent cases and with the obligation of subsequently informing the Holy See.

It is clear therefore that, without such an indult, not even the local Ordinary, much less the parish priest, has any discretionary power over the allocation of special collections, enabling him to divert any part of them to purposes other than

<sup>1</sup> S.C.P.F. instr. a. 1807; Gasparri, C.I.C. *Fontes*, n. 4688.

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those for which they were solicited.<sup>1</sup> Any such diversion, not authorized by a legitimate use of the supreme jurisdiction of the Pope, amounts, as the above-quoted reply of Propaganda expressly declares, to an act of "fraud". However well-meaning the intention with which it is done, it is objectively an act of theft; and theft, unlike mere *damnificatio rei alienae*, binds to restitution, even when there has been no formal guilt in the act of misappropriation. Nor can the charge of fraudulent conversion, or the resulting obligation of restitution, be evaded on the plea that the faithful, in responding to special appeals, leave the precise allocation of their offerings to the discretion of the parish priest. This is no doubt true of the ordinary collections made for the general needs of the parish; but it would have to be proved to be true in respect of each and every contributor, when it is a question of a collection made for a specific and nominated purpose, or an alms box denoting a particular charity. We understand, indeed, that even the civil law would be satisfied with nothing less.

#### DOUBTFUL EXISTENCE OF PREVIOUS MARRIAGE

The Code Commission has ruled that when an ecclesiastical tribunal has failed, after the due judicial process, to resolve a positive doubt about the validity of the earlier of two marriages, it must declare the second invalid. What if the doubt concerns the existence rather than the validity of the earlier marriage? (Sacerdos.)

#### REPLY

Code Commission, 26 June 1947 (A.A.S., 1947, XXXIX, p. 373): "D. An stante positivo et insolubili dubio de validitate primi matrimonii, invalidum, vi can. 1014, declarari debeat

<sup>1</sup> T. Goffi, in his above-quoted article on charitable collections, suggests, on p. 598, that in poor churches where the offerings are collected during the religious service the Ordinary could authorize the retention of the amount corresponding to the alms which would otherwise have been made to the church itself; but he appears to presuppose that the special collection has displaced the ordinary collection, and, in any case, does not pretend that the parish priest has any such power.

secundum matrimonium. R. Affirmative, dummodo causa definiatur ad ordinarium tramitem iuris."

Canon 1014: "Matrimonium gaudet favore iuris; quare in dubio standum est pro valore matrimonii, donec contrarium probetur, salvo praescripto can. 1127."

The answer to the question is to be found in the legal adage: "factum non praesumitur, sed probandum est"; in other words, one must not beg the question by presuming the existence of the alleged fact on which the point at issue turns. Since the law of the Church must especially avoid begging the question when the divine bond of marriage is at stake, authors are agreed that the *favor iuris* of canon 1014 is restricted to marriages that were certainly contracted and, moreover, with at least the outward appearance of validity.<sup>1</sup> It follows, therefore, that a second marriage cannot be declared to be null by reason of a pre-existing bond, while positive doubt remains as to the very existence of the marriage which is alleged to have given rise to the nullifying bond.

Normally the removal of such a doubt requires proof that the marriage was celebrated in a form acknowledged as valid for the parties concerned. There is, however, one admitted exception to this requirement, as the Holy See has more than once explained in dealing with a situation not uncommon in missionary countries; namely, when the first marriage, though it cannot be proved to have been formally contracted, has nevertheless enjoyed peaceful possession, inasmuch as the parties honestly thought themselves to be truly and legitimately married, and their neighbours, sharing their conviction, took no scandal from their union. "Etiam in hoc casu praedictum principium (i.e. the principle enunciated in canon 1014) valeret, et ab eodem recedere non licet."<sup>2</sup> But this, it will be noted, is not an exception to the rule that facts on which claims are based must be proved; rather is it a recognition of peaceful and *bona fide* possession of matrimonial status as a legitimate form of proof of such status.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gasparri, *De Matrimonio*, I, n. 18; Coronata, *De Sacramentis*, III, n. 23; Vermeersch-Creusen, *Epitome I.C.*, II, 1954, n. 279; Jullien, *Apollinaris*, 1951, f. 3-4, p. 301.

<sup>2</sup> Holy Office, 24 January 1877 (*Gasparri, C.I.C.Fontes*, n. 1050, p. 371), quoting also an earlier reply of 18 December 1872, to the same effect (*ibid.*, n. 1024, p. 328).

CHARITABLE DISPOSAL OF SURPLUS  
PAROCHIAL GOODS

Such things as books, vestments, brass, linen, unwanted and unused articles of furniture, etc., tend to accumulate in a presbytery, church and sacristy. To what extent is a parish priest free to dispose of these by gift to a worthy cause? (St A.)

## REPLY

Canon 1535: "Praelati et rectores de bonis mobilibus suarum ecclesiarum donationes, praeterquam parvas et modicas secundum legitimam loci consuetudinem, facere ne praesumant, nisi iusta interveniente causa remunerationis aut pietatis aut christiana caritatis; secus donatio a successoribus revocari poterit."

The answer to this question is governed by the same principles as those which we invoked in dealing with the question of charitable donations from parish funds.<sup>1</sup> Seeking first, in that reply, to determine what kind of parish funds, in the wide sense of the term, come within the scope of canon 1535, we concluded that it could only cover "such things as natural fruits and expendable money which the administrator is free to devote to current needs and obligations". In making this statement, which is accurate enough in its particular context of parish funds, we did not mean to infer that no other parochial property could be donated to a worthy cause. Reference to the canon will make it clear that its scope includes other "movable goods", besides natural fruits and freely expendable cash.

All the items listed by our correspondent clearly come within this category of movable goods; but it must not be forthwith assumed that they are all equally disposable under the terms of the canon. It is possible, though not perhaps likely, that some of them may merit the description of "precious", as defined in canon 1497, §2: "*pretiosa, quibus notabilis valor sit, artis vel historiae vel materiae causa*". If so, canon 1532, §1, 1<sup>o</sup>, collated

<sup>1</sup> THE CLERGY REVIEW, September 1958, pp. 547 ff.

with canon 1530, forbids them to be alienated without leave of the Holy See; and the same applies to "insignes reliquiae aut imagines pretiosae itemque aliae reliquiae aut imagines quae in aliqua ecclesia magna populi veneratione honorentur".<sup>1</sup> Normally, no doubt, parish priests are not tempted to give such things away, even to a worthy cause; but the point is worth stressing, because the parish priest is not altogether unknown to whom objects which others would class as artistically or historically valuable, or locally venerable, are "so much junk" which he would gladly be rid of. Witness the fact that such objects are sometimes found stowed away among the litter cluttering up church lofts and presbytery attics.

The law does not define what precisely is meant by "notable value", nor has the Holy See thus far vouchsafed an authentic estimation. When the Congregation of the Council was asked whether the local Ordinary could determine the limits within which the alienation of precious objects was permissible, it replied, 14 January 1922, that this was a matter for the Code Commission to settle<sup>2</sup>; but no decision has yet come from that authority. It seems fairly probable however, both from the teaching of authors<sup>3</sup> and from the published *votum consultoris* in a case concerning votive offerings,<sup>4</sup> that the value of an object can only be called notable when it exceeds one thousand *lire* or *francs*, reckoned according to their gold-standard value, in 1918, i.e. about forty-one gold sovereigns.<sup>5</sup>

If, on the other hand, as seems likely, we can assume that the objects which our correspondent has in mind are not, by this reckoning, "precious", either artistically, historically or materially, and do not include notable or locally venerable

<sup>1</sup> Canon 1281, §1.

<sup>2</sup> *A.A.S.*, 1922, XIV, p. 160.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Beste, *Introductio in Codicem*, ed. 1956, p. 797; Vermeersch-Creusen, *Epitome I. C.*, II (ed. 1954), n. 819; Brys, *I.C. Compendium*, II, n. 855.

<sup>4</sup> *S.C. Conc.*, 12 July 1919; *A.A.S.*, 1919, XI, p. 416.

<sup>5</sup> *S.C. Consist.*, 13 July 1951 (*A.A.S.*, 1951, XLIII, p. 602), substituted for the "triginta millium libellarum seu francorum" of canon 1532, §1, the sum of ten-thousand gold *lire* or *francs*. An official but unpromulgated table of relative values, said to have been issued to papal legates, 18 October 1952 (THE CLERGY REVIEW, April 1954, p. 250), gave the equivalent as £2000 in paper money, and added that the sum of "mille libellarum seu francorum, de qua in §2 canonis 1532" is a thirtieth part of the above, i.e. about £66 in paper money. Since, however, no reference is made to the valuation of precious objects, Vermeersch-Creusen (*loc. cit.*) does not regard this statement as applicable to the latter.

relics or images, the rule is that no special reason is required in order to dispose of them "in small and modest donations, according to legitimate local custom"; but that, to exceed this limit, there must be a just cause of "remuneration, piety, or Christian charity". Such a reason should not be difficult to find, especially when the donee is a newly established parish, or other penurious ecclesiastical institution, to which the articles unwanted and unused by the donor would bring an appreciable aid. But in case of doubt as to whether the gift exceeds the limit of ordinary administration, the leave of the Ordinary must be sought, because a gift of that character would be invalid, by canon 1527, and a probable opinion is no safeguard against invalidity.

L. L. McR.

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### BOOK REVIEWS

*Eglise, Peuple de Dieu.* By Jean-Marie Leroux. (Les Editions Ouvrières, Paris, 1958. 780 francs.)

THIS is the latest volume to appear in the series *Eglise d'hier et d'aujourd'hui* and whereas most of the previous volumes have dealt with the great figures of the early centuries, St Basil the Great, St Ignatius of Antioch, St Ambrose, this work takes in its wide sweep the history of the Church throughout the ages down to the present day. It is not a formal history with an apparatus of dates and epochs, but rather a series of five meditations on the vicissitudes of the Church of Christ, five frescos each of them on the theme of a text from the New Testament. The first, "You will renew the face of the earth", is a summary of historical events from the first Pentecost to the immense stature of the modern Popes in their defence of the human person and of the family; the second, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism", covers the sad story of heresies and schisms; the third, "Going, teach all nations", deals with the history of Catholic thought and teaching with a special section on the *magisterium*; the fourth, "They remain in the world", treats of the apostolate; the fifth, "the Church, source of life", gives in some sixty pages an enthralling *aperçu* of the history of spirituality in the

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Church. This little work is strongly recommended because in it M. Leroux has found a method of giving life to the dry bones of history and succeeds in adding a greater depth and meaning to our understanding of "the liberty and exaltation of our Holy Mother, the Church" for which we pray every day.

*The Coming World Civilization.* By William Ernest Hocking. (George Allen & Unwin, London, 1958. 16s.)

PROFESSOR HOCKING in "the ripeness of years", one might almost say in the autumn of his days, has been moved to prophesy, and the burden of his prophecy, wrapped up in philosophical and animistic verbiage, is that the coming world civilization will be the expression of some form of syncretic religion. His criticism of secular foundations is in many ways as subjective as his acceptance of Christianity. A lack of understanding of the true distinction between natural and supernatural, e.g. "the deep naturalness of Christianity grows on me as I write", as well as an over-simplified approach to the differences between religious bodies, e.g. "Quakers and Catholics together bear their partials of a total truth, which includes the truth of a continuing historical community of aggressive *caritas* at once material and spiritual", render Professor Hocking's positive conclusions of little practical value, while making the reader more than a little suspicious of his easy optimism. Nonetheless, one cannot but feel sympathy for his preoccupation with the great religions of the East and with the necessity of finding some possibility of a dialogue with them, as exemplified by his rare epigram: "if the East has needed the technical steel of the West, the West needs the spiritual iron of the East".

*Paroisses urbaines, Paroisses rurales.* By F. Boulard, J. H. Fichter, F. Houtart, G. Laloux, H. Mendras and D. Szabo. (Casterman, 1958, Tournai. 84 fr. B.)

THIS work brings together a number of the papers that were read, by Catholic sociologists from all over the world, at the Fifth International Conference of Religious Sociology held in Louvain in September 1956. Some of the papers are theoretical, others give the results of recent research in places as far apart as Rome, Buenos Aires and Chicago, but they all have in common a determination to use the latest findings in sociology for the apostolate in and through the parish community. The assumption which underlies these studies is that pastoral work must adapt itself to the social ecology of the surroundings, whether urban or rural, in which the

parish is situated. There can be no quarrel with this, for it is merely another way of saying that a parish is made up of real people living in a real world of the here and now, and not of disembodied statistics. When the analysis is pursued even further, to the structure of the parish itself, it is often found that the haphazard drawing of boundaries or subsequent changes of population have made pastoral work more difficult. Hence the title of the third section: "The Planning of Urban Parishes", the contributors to which make it quite clear that by now certain general rules have emerged which have a universal validity. The value of this section is enhanced by the examples, drawn from a number of European cities, of how these rules work in practice. While the various contributors would be the first to admit that their essays are no more than reports on work in progress, their results so far are heartening and of great promise for the future. There is only one reservation: these papers were written by specialists to be read to specialists and hence the general reader will find them rather heavy going.

*National Wages Policy in War and Peace.* By B. C. Roberts. Pp. 180. (George Allen & Unwin, London, 1958. 15s.)

MR ROBERTS, Reader in Industrial Relations at the London School of Economics, has made a valuable contribution to one of the most important, and controversial, questions in our present-day economy. The argument is about the causes and cure of inflation, or how to stabilize money and prices, and the two camps divide over the question of wages policy. First, there are those who are in favour of "a national wages policy", by which wage demands would be tied to productivity increases and this would provide the structure for all wages. Mr Roberts shows convincingly that where this has been tried, in Holland, Australia, Sweden and war-time America, it has not been sufficient to guarantee lasting price stability. The other camp holds that there must be restriction of demand, if necessary by a stern fiscal policy which will restrict money and inevitably cause unemployment. The conclusion would seem to be that if full employment, i.e. no more than the post-war average of 1.5 per cent unemployment, is to be preserved then more centralized control of wages policy is essential. This Mr Roberts successfully contests, because, in fact, it seems impossible to have both full employment and price stability—the most that one can hope for is a compromise balance between the evils of unemployment and inflation. Mr Roberts argues in favour of the continuance of collective bargaining, but in a decentralized form, at the plant or local level as is the case in the U.S.A. In this way efficiency and progress, as well as increased

production, would be rewarded. This suggestion is certainly worth consideration, although the way "pattern-following" operates in the negotiation of wage-contracts in America does not lead one to expect overwhelming benefits. Perhaps the most important conclusion, which Mr Roberts does not draw, is that British trade unionism itself must have a wage policy and that one element in it might very well be to explore the possibilities of increasing real wages through falling prices, allied with an explicit assumption of greater responsibility than it seems willing to take at present.

*For My Name's Sake. Catholic Resistance in Europe, 1939-58.* By Ronald Settle. Pp. ix + 246. (Bles, London, 1958. 18s.)

UNLESS we are constantly reminded we tend to forget that in the past twenty years the Church in Europe, first under the Nazis in the West and now under the Communists in the East, is suffering the fiercest and most unrelenting persecution in the whole of its history. Our thanks then are due to Mr Settle, himself not a Catholic, who has been moved by the courage and fortitude of Catholics to write this detailed account of what was done by the Nazis in the countries they occupied in Western Europe (he omits the Nazi persecution of the Church in Germany proper, apart from a chapter on Dachau), and what is being done today by the Communists east of the Iron Curtain.

The reader would do well to begin by studying the chart given at the end of the book which records the main developments in the Communist technique of persecution. Here is set down the turns of the screw, with dates, in eleven European countries. One has only to list them to understand the magnitude of the cross which our brethren in these countries have been called on to bear: Schools nationalized and religious institutions restricted, Church property nationalized, Economic blockade, Attempts to split the Church, Catholic organizations suppressed, Laws for State appointment of officials, Arrest of Primate, Break with the Vatican, Imprisonment of bishops, Public meetings, etc., prohibited, Orders and Seminaries suppressed, Catholic Press suppressed, *Modus vivendi* discussed—in three out of the eleven countries. At the end of this sad litany one begins to understand the horror contained in the phrase "The Church of Silence". Separate chapters are devoted to each of the People's Democracies, except for the Baltic States of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, which are dealt with in one chapter, showing how the same blue-print of persecution and suppression has been applied. The speed has not always been the same but the objective is the same, and the pressure is applied or relaxed according to circum-

stances or for propaganda reasons. Today the position of the Church ranges from the uneasy truce in Poland to Czechoslovakia where the Communists "have dealt the Church such a blow that now only a miracle can revive it". No reasonable man could refuse to share the author's admiration and humility in the face of such suffering and fortitude.

Two small criticisms of an otherwise invaluable book. The subtitle claims to bring the story up to 1958, but in the nature of things where news trickles through so slowly this is obviously impossible. The bibliography is unclassified and is rather scanty. One misses particularly any reference to the well-documented publications of the Mid-European Studies Centre of the Free Europe Committee.

J. F.

*St Odo of Cluny: Being the Life of St Odo of Cluny by John of Salerno and the Life of St Gerald of Aurillac by St Odo.* Translated and Edited by Dom Gerard Sitwell, o.s.b. (Sheed & Ward. 16s.)

THIS is another volume of the useful *Makers of Christendom Series*, edited by Mr Christopher Dawson, of which four have already appeared. They are biographical and autobiographical documents representing vital epochs and commanding personalities in the long annals of the Church. These two narratives, translated and annotated with all the skill and the resources of the best modern scholarship, bring before us the personality of a very great abbot, the second of that astonishing dynasty of abbot-saints who ruled for so long the most famous of all monasteries. Berno's successor, St Odo (879-942), created the centre of a reform that was to spread all over France and far beyond, and so to make Cluny the monastic capital of Christendom. Though he did not himself directly build up the vast system which, humanly speaking, saved everything during the Dark Night of the Western Church, Odo laid the foundations of Cluny's influence and prestige as the centre of Benedictine orthodoxy and as a great lighthouse of Christian civilization.

The *Vita Odonis* by John of Salerno is, of course, a document of its time, primitive, redolent of the Dark Ages; we are in a world not so far removed from that depicted by Gregory of Tours. The purpose of nearly everything that was written then was edification not information; many texts, many strange stories, very little that we should like to know. It is all very naïve, a popular Christian mythology, following carefully a tradition that demanded signs and wonders. There are, nevertheless, in the *Life*, some natural and lively touches which make us want to know more about a great churchman who was the friend and adviser of popes and kings.

*The Life of St Gerald of Aurillac* (855-909) by St Odo himself is naturally somewhat similar. Gerald was a gentle and pious nobleman, delicate and deemed unfit for "worldly pursuits", who lived frugally and gave much of his substance to the poor, made the pilgrimage to Rome, and founded at Aurillac a monastery destined to a certain celebrity.

There is a wealth of knowledge here in the Introduction and, conspicuously, in the learned and copious notes. It is impossible to imagine how anything of the kind could be better done. Some will note Dom Gerard's conclusion that the bones of St Benedict did remain at Fleury. There is also a point of great anthropological interest in his notes on the "Marrones", the colony of Saracen marauders who, late in the ninth century, established themselves on the Golfe de St Tropez, on the coast of Provence; its significance was startlingly brought out in 1952 when an English family (the Drummonds) was ruthlessly slaughtered for a trifling sum of money. Dom Gerard reminds the reader of the work of the regional writer, Jean Giono, who maintains that the inhabitants of those parts have inter-bred for a thousand years in their little walled towns, untouched by the modern world.

*The Catholic Church in the Modern World. A Survey from the French Revolution to the present.* By E. E. Y. Hales. (Eyre & Spottiswoode. Burns Oates. 30s.)

MR HALES, whose excellent biography of Pio Nono has been widely appreciated, here undertakes a larger task. This wide-ranging survey is not really "a study of the Catholic Church as a political factor in modern times". While it is in a measure a commentary, it is at the same time thoroughly historical because it is a record of a series of conflicts. The chronological method is the only way of relating the collisions between Pius VI and the French Revolution, between Pius VII and Napoleon, Pius IX and Victor Emmanuel, Leo XIII and Bismarck, Pius X and the Third Republic, Pius XI and Hitler, and moreover Pius XI's attempt at accord with Mussolini and Pius XII's efforts against the dark powers of the Soviet Union. On the other side lies the discussion of doctrinal issues: the condemnation of Lamennais, the Syllabus of Errors, the Vatican Council, "Americanism" and Modernism. The two strands have been skilfully interwoven in this study of many critical conjunctures where the safeguarding of the Faith and of spiritual jurisdiction brought the Church into active opposition to the Secular State, and in this later age into uneasy relations with indifferent and materialistic democracies. The standpoint is Rome; the foreground, Western

Europe, but the horizon is America. Indeed, a group of chapters, and these, perhaps, the most important, explain American developments and in view of the probability that American forms of government will be adopted in other continents, the book should prove to be specially interesting and instructive to the American reader. The doctrinal element, the European setting and the American extension of the scene all, so to speak, interlock and react upon one another, because the experience of each sphere is necessarily carried on into the others. The method involves selection and synoptic handling, but lucidity and continuity are achieved; the theoretical and the abstract are avoided so that from the continuous narrative there emerges something much more than a chronicle.

The long pontificate of Pius IX is central to the narrative both in point of time and of significance. In the matter of the Papal States his predecessors had bequeathed to him an insoluble problem, but a still greater difficulty lay in those important doctrinal pronouncements he was called upon to make. Mr Hales has explained very clearly the true nature and intent of *Quanta Cura* and the *Syllabus of Errors*, while admitting that the intellectual horizon of the Pontiff was decidedly limited and that he had no real understanding of the profound changes in the whole structure and character of modern society that were operating before his eyes. Although Pius IX did so much to consolidate the faith and devotion of Catholics—so to speak—internally, his handling of external relations was inadequate, and he needlessly allowed himself to appear (and inevitably to be represented) as the professed opponent of “liberty, progress and modern civilization”. Mr Hales’ treatment of all this is clear and careful, but there is no mention whatever of that very unfortunate episode, the Mortara case, which gave a handle to all the Pope’s critics and made every Jew an implacable enemy.

There is also some contradiction in the statement on pp. 159 and 162 respectively as to the positions of Canadian Catholics under the Quebec Act; the latter is the correct one. The action of Leo XIII in his great Encyclicals on social and industrial questions is very well explained; so, too, the difficulties created for the Holy See by the new Kingdom of Italy, by the Third Republic of France and by the new German Empire. The great struggle over the Kultur Kampf, the activities of Windhorst and the German Centre Party, “Americanism” and the fortunes of Archbishop Ireland are things largely forgotten now because thrown into the shade by far more lurid events; but they deserve to be recalled and placed in their due perspective and the British, as well as the American, reader should

therefore find this admirable survey very convenient for reference as well as for his general enlightenment.

The volume is very well produced and is provided with a most useful time-chart and a bibliography proportionate to the contents.

J. J. DWYER

*The Life of Christ.* By Andrés Fernandez, s.j. Translated by Paul Barrett, O.F.M. CAP. Pp. xx + 817. (The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland. \$12.50.)

IT is always a welcome task to read a new *Life of Christ*, for although it is in the nature of things that one cannot expect to find in it anything very new or very startling, inevitably each author approaches a biography of our Lord from his own particular viewpoint, and in so doing throws fresh light on the subject. We can always be enriched by seeing familiar things from a new angle. *The Life of Christ* under review comes from the pen of a scholar of many years' standing, a former Professor and Rector of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, and the study is the fruit of some forty years' work.

Fr Fernandez devotes only a small amount of space to the consideration of such general questions as the authenticity, canonicity and historicity of the Gospels, nor does he concern himself overmuch with the problems posed by the rationalists and the form critics. In fact his introduction to the biography proper is limited to a brief treatment of the chronology of the Gospels, the historical background and the geography of Palestine. In this last field the author is an acknowledged expert, and throughout the book the incidents of the Gospel are particularly vividly described in respect of the topographical setting. The author is obviously intimately acquainted with the Holy Land, and succeeds in building up for us a picture of the country as our Lord must Himself have known it. Throughout the book, too, he calls on his extensive archaeological knowledge to help clear up the many problems still surrounding the identification of various place-names mentioned in the Gospels.

The history of our Lord's life is told in the form of an easy-flowing narrative, with pauses only where it is necessary to sort out a difficulty or to bring to our attention some particular devotional aspect—the thread of the narrative is never lost, and the book is never in danger of becoming a mere technical commentary.

Despite the undoubtedly excellence of the work there are some criticisms that can be made. Any biographer of Christ's life must ask himself, for whom is the book intended, what purpose is it to fulfil? Is it to be for scholars, for students, or for the general interested public? In the present instance it is not quite clear what audience

the author has in mind, unless, possibly, all three types of reader. Perhaps there is too much specialization today, but surely in a work like this one has to specialize to a certain extent, and cater for one definite audience. As it stands, from the point of view of the general reader the work is rather overloaded with references and detailed treatment of minutiae, while from the point of view of the scholar or student there is insufficient account taken of certain points (for example, the question of the "firstborn son" of our Lady is passed over in half a dozen lines). The author has, of course, every right to choose which incidents he will deal with most fully, and can with justification say that those points he has not expanded are dealt with in other books; nevertheless, to the reviewer at any rate, there seems to be a certain lack of proportion. It is unfortunate, too, that although the book is on the whole most suited to the interested layman, its price will make even the hardiest librarian think twice. (One would have thought, incidentally, that the photographs could have been better reproduced, and, as regards some, more aptly chosen.)

However, perhaps one is being over-critical of a work that is, in the main, excellent, and we must be grateful to Fr Fernandez for shedding fresh light on our Lord's life and His times, and to Fr Barrett for his most admirable translation.

*Christian Humanism*. By Louis Bouyer. Pp. 110. (Geoffrey Chapman. 10s. 6d.)

THE author sees the likelihood in the present day of the resurgence of a modernism whose "cause does not lie in an intoxication with results of historical research or a particular philosophy of religion; . . . (but) rather in the mental uncertainty prevalent in a turbulent age, joined to a kind of intellectual demagogery eager to baptize every fashion of thought on its first appearance". It is his awareness of this tendency which has led him to write this essay. In it he examines the assertion of the humanist that man, if he is to be fully man, must cut himself off from Christianity and stick to the last on which he is modelled; and that of certain people, themselves Christians, who find an insurmountable opposition, more than a paradox, between the perfection of the Creation and the evil which erected the Cross.

The humanist, or what is possibly nearer the mark the rationalist, takes his stand on the enslaving influence of Christianity, which prevents man from thinking clearly and sets thereby a barrier to any true progress. However, says Fr Bouyer, we are enslaved not by Christianity but by the preconceived dogmatisms and gratuitous

assumptions of the non-Christian thinker—scientist or otherwise—who finds in man a satisfactory answer to everything and who therefore rejects God and all dependence upon him. Such a person is led to his position by his own belief in the eventual, and not too distant, mastery of the world by man. We can see now nearly to the end of space; we can control the atom; shortly, perhaps, the secret of life itself will be in our hands. What need, then, have we of God? Man is sufficient unto himself.

The author approaches the question through the relationship of the creation of the world by God to the redemption of the world by Christ, the proper appreciation of which is fundamental to the discussion. It is in the light of this relationship that he considers the role of the intellect in faith, the paradox of servitude to God being the only way to freedom, the place of contemplation in a world that looks only for action, and finally the necessary part that asceticism must play in the life of the Christian.

In an age when we are in danger of being engulfed in a stream of pseudo-scientific inference that seems sometimes so plausible, a book like this is a salutary check-rein. It helps to focus our attention in the right direction, and to plant our feet firmly on the ground. Man is not the Alpha and Omega of the world, and he cannot master it—"there is more in the world than can be grasped by our thought". Material progress is the avowed aim of all science and technology today, yet it is a completely fruitless aim, for it will bring the world not one whit nearer the reign of charity. All that can achieve this is dependence on God, in particular in his Creation and in the Cross. Such dependence, too, is the only sure way to knowledge, for it is only through the Cross that Creation can ultimately be comprehended.

D. K.

*Medico-Moral Problems.* By Gerald Kelly, s.j. Pp. 384. (The Catholic Hospital Association of the U.S. and Canada, St Louis, Mo. \$3.00 (soft cover).)

BETWEEN 1949 and 1955, Fr Kelly, who is one of the best known and most experienced of American medico-moralists, published a series of five booklets with the above title. The first four of these were reproduced under a single cover by Clonmore & Reynolds, in 1955, as noted at the time in this REVIEW. Now, the author has produced a collected and revised edition of all five, omitting some material that was obsolete, adding new, and reorganizing the contents so as to gather everything on a given topic into the same chapter. Although, as should be clear from its title and history, the book does not pretend to be a comprehensive textbook of medical

ethics, it covers most of the topics on which priests in hospital service are liable to be consulted for moral guidance, and it manifests the author's conversance with medical facts and practice to a degree which should win the respect of medical men for his doctrine and conclusions. On the thorny question discussed in this REVIEW, August 1956, pp. 485 ff., as to whether it is direct sterilization, and therefore prohibited, to remove a womb which has been so damaged by previous caesareans as to be likely to create serious danger in a future pregnancy, though not independently of such an event, he provides a more up-to-date round-up of current opinions. We can cordially recommend this book to priests and doctors alike.

*Disqualification of Electors in Ecclesiastical Elections.* By Timothy Mock, C.M.M. Pp. xi + 210. (The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C. Canon Law Studies, n. 365. \$2.00 (paper-bound).)

ELECTION by a corporate body, though now a much less common way of filling ecclesiastical offices than it was until the later Middle Ages, when free conferment by the superior became the favoured way, is still part of the regular procedure of many religious communities; and it was largely in the context of religious life that the modern electoral law was gradually evolved. The precise topic of the present dissertation is the exclusion of unfit electors from the electoral college. Since the Code merely reproduces, on this point, the law which it inherited, Fr Mock wisely devotes most of his book to historical research and does it very competently. He demonstrates, against some modern authors who have not perhaps delved as deeply into the past, that the law does not distinguish between unfit and unworthy candidates and disqualifies an electoral body which knowingly elects either.

L. L. McR.

*Why I Became a Missioner.* By Rev. George L. Kane. Pp. 273. (The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland, U.S.A. \$3.25.)

This book is a collection of twenty "Vocation Stories", autobiographical sketches by a bishop, priests, laybrothers, sisters and lay people, of how they came to embrace the missionary vocation they are now engaged upon. The stories are told in a homely style, now and again a bit romantic, but with a candid honesty which, for English tastes, may seem embarrassing. The family backgrounds of most of the candidates is, of course, genuinely American and, although the growth of a vocation ever seems to follow the same track, still the appealing power of the story will be less for an English boy or girl

than for their American equals. The reflexions of the writers as they muse over the mysterious ways God used to draw them to the missionary life are interesting but necessarily superficial. The descriptions of actual mission life along the Amazon River, in Africa, India or China are informative and as kaleidoscopic as a Geographical Magazine.

The quality of the contributions varies greatly, and it is not merely chivalry towards the weaker sex which would acclaim some of the sister writers as the best ones.

As a whole, the book is easy to read, light, wholesome and propagandistic, but more suitable to provide examples and perhaps inspiration for "vocation-campaigners" than stirring and appealing to possible candidates for a missionary career.

J. DE REEPER

## CORRESPONDENCE

### THE DIALOGUE MASS—A CLARIFICATION

The Rev. L. L. McReavy writes:

I have been asked to clarify a point of canon law which Fr O'Connell raised in his explanatory article on "The New Instruction of the Congregation of Rites" (THE CLERGY REVIEW, February 1959, pp. 90 ff), and on which, to judge by one newspaper comment, some confusion seems to have arisen. It concerns the power of local Ordinaries to regulate the implementation of the aforesaid Instruction, particularly as regards the various forms of dialogue Mass.

As Fr O'Connell rightly observed, quoting canon 1257, Ordinaries "have no direct legislative power in matters liturgical, this is reserved to the Holy See" (loc. cit., p. 93). They cannot therefore forbid outright anything which the Instruction positively permits. Thus, when the practice of dialogue Mass first arose, the attitude of the Holy See was one of toleration rather than positive permission, the decision being left to the local Ordinary. But the recent Instruction not only permits it; it positively recommends it. No local Ordinary is therefore any longer free to forbid the practice altogether, nor does its lawfulness, properly speaking, derive from or depend upon his permission.

Nevertheless, by canons 336 and 1261, it is the right and duty of Ordinaries to invigilate over the implementation of liturgical

laws, in order to ensure that they are put into practice in an orderly, seemly and fruitful fashion. This entails the right to judge and decide what degree of active participation in the Mass can at once be fittingly attained in various places and circumstances, and therefore to regulate, at least in this sense, the pace at which the Church's goal of full participation is reached. It is evident, for example, that few congregations can fittingly attempt the second or third grade of dialogue Mass without previous training, and that, as the Instruction itself says, only select groups will ever be able to manage the fourth grade. An Ordinary is therefore within his rights in laying down conditions to this effect, and in reserving to himself the judgement as to when and where they are duly fulfilled.

#### “VOCE TANTISPER ELEVATA”

The Rev. J. D. Crichton writes:

I wonder if your readers could elucidate a small point of Latin translation that crops up in the recent Instruction of Pius XII on the active participation of the laity in the liturgy? In the section (78) on the broadcasting of the Mass the Instruction has the phrase “*voce tantisper elevata*”, referring to the raising of the celebrant's voice in the “secret” parts of the Mass. This is translated in *Worship* as “in a slightly elevated voice”. The translation that appeared in *Worship* has been printed in *The Furrow*, and so is likely to have a wide currency in these islands. Yet Lewis and Short give no countenance to such a translation of *tantisper*. That great dictionary gives it a temporal meaning: “for so long a time, so long; in the meantime, meanwhile”. My ancient *Ainsworth's Latin Dictionary* gives the same meaning. The Instruction wishes to say presumably that *so long as* the celebrant is saying the secret parts he should *raise his voice*, without, however, giving any directive as to how much. It will be seen that there is a considerable difference and it might affect practice.

It was tempting to translate “in a slightly raised voice” as one read the passage through for first time and the whole context seems to demand that, but I can find no justification in any of the usual sources, and a classical scholar whom I consulted about it had to admit, after some search, that only a temporal meaning for *tantisper* was possible. It seems difficult to suppose that it might have a different meaning in modern curial Latin which usually scrupulously observes classical usage. If the writers of the document had wanted to say “slightly”, they would presumably have used something like *aliquantulo*.

Looking at the whole passage it seems to me that what the writers wanted to indicate was that the voice used for the secret parts in a broadcast Mass was that that would be normally used for the Proper, for they go on to say that if he (the celebrant) pronounces "in a louder voice (*altius*) whatever is to be said *aloud* . . . the listeners will readily be able to follow the entire Mass" (I have taken this last part of the translation from *Worship*).

Perhaps some of your readers who are familiar with the *stylus Curiae* can throw light on the matter.

#### BIEL ON THE MASS

(THE CLERGY REVIEW, February 1959, pp. 126-7)

Fr Crehan, s.j., writes:

Mr C. J. F. Williams in his letter about my article on Biel raises the point that the Mass is so much *one* with the sacrifice of the Cross that Biel's nominalism or another theologian's moderate realism could make no difference to their theology of the Mass. I should have thought that the state of theological opinion on the very precise and narrow issue whether the Mass is specifically, or also numerically, one with the sacrifice of the Cross is such that one's view about the way in which a universal predicate can rightly be applied to two or more instances matters a great deal to that question. To see the state of theological opinion one need do no more than cite the article "Messe" in the *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* (volume 10, columns 1286-9), where a great variety of opinions is displayed. Trent defined that in the Mass, as on the Cross, there was the same Victim and the same Offerer, but the manner of offering was different in each case. The decree was carried by 132 to 9 votes, and among the dissidents there was a general opinion that Christ did not offer at the Last Supper, and thus *a fortiori* could not be said to do so at Mass. To them there would be a relation of likeness between Last Supper, Cross, and Mass, but not an identity. One need not examine minutely whether in fact each of the nine dissidents was a nominalist in philosophy, but it seems to me that a nominalist background would account for their views of the Mass, just as for Biel's.

When Cardinal Allen came to write his *De sacramentis* some ten years after the definition of Trent, he noted (p. 551) that the *communio nominum* by which two realities were denoted by the same predicate covered a wide variety of relationships, ranging from

remote similarity to identity. The Scripture called Christ the image of the Father, and yet He was of one substance with Him; in the case of the Mass, likeness to the sacrifice of Christ did not exclude identity with it. The Cardinal added his strictures on the Scholastics for their shortcomings here, and said that, in his opinion, it was now heretical to deny that Christ offered at the Last Supper. One can see this "likeness—identity" confusion operating at a later date in the fact that for certain Japanese martyrs, who were canonized by Pius IX and whose feast is kept by the Orders to which they belonged on 5 February, the Secret prayer began with the words: *... crucis sacrificium recolentes* . . . words which have now been changed (since 1951) for the more correct . . . *offerentes*. To recall it would be to have a likeness of the sacrifice of the Cross, but to offer it would be to have the same. I still think that Biel's stress on likeness was the one fatal flaw in his teaching on the Mass. He regarded it as the sacrifice of Christ (where Christ was victim) but not as Christ's sacrifice (where Christ was offerer), for he took the priest to be the agent of the Church only and not of Christ. Hence there was for him not identity between the Mass and Calvary but similarity. His nominalist philosophy prevented him from seeing that this was not enough to ensure that the two could be called the same sacrifice. Trent found a way round the obstacle by considering what happened at the Last Supper, where Christ offered; if so, He could also be said to offer in the Mass.

(THE CLERGY REVIEW, October 1958, pp. 606-17)

Edward J. Foye writes:

Because Luther first used Biel's *Expositio* as a preparation for ordination, and prior to his own theological studies, influence of this work upon Luther's subsequent heresies is not to be easily presumed. The present writer is not in a position to consult either Biel or Luther's annotations on Biel, and is, consequently, at a disadvantage in establishing this criticism and the following.

Secondly, it might be helpful to point out that Biel was a fairly faithful Ockhamist, and that his use of "similar" and "species" may be presumed in the texts supplied by Fr Crehan to be capable of Ockhamist interpretation. In accordance with this presumption, when Biel says that the effects of the sacrifice of Calvary are *similar* to the effects of the sacrifice of the Mass he may very probably mean precisely what another non-Ockhamist theologian means when he says "the same". Thus, for example, the "other" theologian might call the *whiteness* of this wall the *same* as the *whiteness* of that wall,

while the Ockhamist would call it similar. We may say like things about the Ockhamist *species*. Fr Crehan notes that Biel would affirm that the sacrifices of the Cross and the Mass are the same as to species; by this Biel would most probably mean that under their formal aspect they are the same but that they are not numerically one.

These explanations, cursory as they are, are offered in the hope that the impression that Biel was unorthodox by Tridentine standards will not be formed on the basis of his relatively esoteric terminology.

#### READINGS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE

(THE CLERGY REVIEW, December 1958, p. 762)

The Newman Press communicates the following:

The review by "J. M." of *Readings in the Philosophy of Nature*, edited by Henry J. Koren, printed in the December 1958 issue of THE CLERGY REVIEW, incorrectly states that this book is part of a series of anthologies on different aspects of philosophy to be published by Duquesne University.

*Readings in the Philosophy of Nature* is actually one of the volumes in "The College Readings Series", a group of anthologies covering the social sciences and philosophy, all of which were planned and which are to be published over the next few years by The Newman Press.

Your reviewer has apparently confused "The College Readings Series" with the "Duquesne Studies", an excellent series in Thomistic philosophy dealing with the problems raised in modern science, of which Fr Koren, the Chairman of the Philosophy Department at Duquesne University, is the very capable editor.

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